



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Walmart General Manager Kimberly Smith stands outside the Warrenton location set to open on Wednesday.

WALMART ERA BEGINS ON THE NORTH COAST

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — After years of lawsuits, settling on a location and building a store-front, the North Coast's new Walmart opens at 8 a.m. Wednesday on the corner of Ensign Lane and U.S. Highway 101.

The national retailer has been filling its new supercenter and training staff in preparation for the grand opening. General Manager Kimberly Smith said the store has hired more than 250 people.

GRAND OPENING

The North Coast's new Walmart is located on the corner of Ensign Lane and U.S. Highway 101. It's scheduled to open at 8 a.m. Wednesday.

"I want to say 95, 98 percent of our associates are local," Smith said, adding that while the store has enough people to open, it will continue to hire.

The 150,000-square-foot supercenter includes groceries, electronics, clothing, home accessories, sporting goods, a pharmacy, auto and outdoors, along with a Subway restaurant and ATM. The store has made nods to local hobbies, such as clam guns, crab pots and a do-it-yourself baiting area, Smith said.

See **WALMART**, Page 5A

6-12-2018

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Astorian*



Monday, September 21, 2009

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By SANDRA SWAIN and CASSANDRA PROFITA
The Daily Astorian

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Nygaard was able to secure most of the necessary permits for developing his 17-acre site on U.S. Highway 101 without revealing the identity of his future tenant.

And elected officials, including Mayor Gil Gramson, have continued to maintain they didn't know who it would be.

Maxfield said a pre-application meeting for the project was held Wednesday, attended by an attorney for Walmart, an engineer, a representative from the Oregon Department of Transportation and some city staff members. Maxfield, who was away on vacation last week, said he just found out Monday that the meeting had been held and Walmart was the applicant.

The pre-application meeting is a way for developers to find out from the city ahead of time about what they will need to complete their application. He said the next step will be for the developers to come back to the city with the completed application and a site design, which must be approved before building permits will be issued.

Josh Phair, spokesman for Walmart, said his company is in the process of buying the land. The store will take nine to 12 months to build once ground is broken. The store will contain general merchandise, a full-size grocery and a garden center.

"We certainly don't anticipate any problems with this particular store, although we also recognize these projects are very complex," said Phair. "I know many in the city are excited. Residents of Warrenton are excited. We expect support from the city and residents."

Phair said the store will employ 300 people, but he doesn't know yet how many will be full-time associates. There will also be "quite a few" local construction jobs created in building the store, he said, but he doesn't have a number yet.

The development would consist of 153,239 square feet of retail space and would have 656 parking spaces, according to information submitted by Nygaard's company, Warrenton Fiber, Inc., to the Department of State Lands and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in December 2008. It is expected to yield 50 to 100 full-time jobs and the same number of temporary construction jobs, according to documents.

The majority of the site - 14.9 acres - consists of wetlands. Proposed mitigation for filling in the wetlands consists of conserving five properties totaling approximately 152 acres of forested wetland, riparian habitat and estuarine wetland, mostly within two miles of the development site.

North Coast Land Conservancy, a local nonprofit land trust, has agreed to own and manage the mitigation lands into perpetuity.

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<http://www.dailyastorian.com/print.asp?ArticleID=64260&SectionID=2&SubSectionID=3...> 9/24/2009

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Tammy Slaughter: "It's about time."

The newspaper welcomes other reactions. Attach an "article comment" at the bottom of this story online or e-mail a letter to the editor, with daytime contact details and your name and hometown, to (ewilson@dailyastorian.com)

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Thinking about the box

This letter in response to the July 29 editorial in *The Daily Astorian*, "Warrenton's big box culture comes with a price," that states, "One social cost of Costco or Home Depot is that they do not nurture community through giving."

In 1996, Costco Wholesale "adopted" Lewis and Clark Elementary for the Backpack Program. Costco provided several hundred backpacks and school supplies to children. A few years later, they continued to provide the backpacks, but allowed the Lunch Buddy Mentoring Program to spearhead the program by distributing the backpacks. The program became so successful and large, that the entire Clatsop County school districts were included in the program. That commitment occurred about eight years ago.

As a matter of fact, Clatsop County is the largest recipient of backpacks in our entire nation due to the expansion of our program to include more schools. In the last eight years, approximately 10,000 backpacks with school supplies with Costco's support. That is a conservative number. The Backpack Program is just one example of the generosity of Warrenton's Costco. I have gone in on several occasions, requesting donations for various fundraisers for other organizations. The managers there are always very cooperative.

Look around our schools in the county and you will find hundreds of matching backpacks hanging from hooks in the hall-

ways, hanging off the shoulders of young students, starting students off with school supplies on their first day of school. Big things come out of big boxes.

KARNA C. CUPPLES

Executive director, Lunch Buddy
Mentoring Program
Seaside

Costco supports community

The opening statement "Social Costs are an elusive concept" in the opinion piece published in *The Daily Astorian's* editorial page on July 29 about the big box culture ("Warrenton's big box culture comes with a price"), and specifically referencing Costco as one that "does not nurture community through giving," struck me as patently untrue in relationship to the Warrenton Costco faculty.

The Costco in Warrenton has been and is a major supporter of United Way of Clatsop County. I looked up some figures just to give everyone an idea of how much their presence means. Since 2002, when UWCC financial records were computerized, \$107,580 has come to United Way annual campaigns through Costco.

They run a United Way Campaign for their employees and provide a 50 percent corporate match of employee's contributions. In addition to the actual funding, Costco provides in-kind donations of products for many of our special events that we ask sponsors to pay for so that all the charitable contributions are used appropriately.

They do this not only for our organization, but for many others as well.

We have also, from time to time had employees from Costco serve as board members with the blessing and support of their employer. They, too, have provided community service benefiting our region.

The funding that comes to United Way is distributed to the various health and human service agencies, 15 to 18 we help annually. To list a few: American Red Cross, Clatsop Community Action, Camp Kiwanilong, Women's Resource Center/Pioneer House, Boy Scouts, The Light-house for Kids and on and on. Without Costco, there would be less to distribute.

These agencies in turn use the local funding from UWCC to leverage additional grants that brings in additional funding to help serve those in our communities.

Bottom line, Costco does not show a "disinterest in community," but is an active participant on many fronts. They contribute financially, they contribute products in-kind to many groups and their employees volunteer at many levels in the community.

To wrap this up, I agree "Social costs are an elusive concept" in some circumstances, maybe, but am completely convinced that that is not the case with our Costco facility. Their presence is beneficial and they very definitely "nurture our communities through giving."

DARLENE FELKINS

Executive director, United Way of
Clatsop County

137th YEAR, No. 60

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2009

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Walmart: Newspaper welcomes reactions

Continued from Page 1

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9-22-2009

The rumors are true.

A new Walmart Supercenter slated for construction in Warrenton will take shape along U.S. Highway 101 sometime next year, on property near Marlin Avenue behind the Les Schwab Tire Center. It would be the first Walmart store on the North Coast of Oregon.

Warrenton City Planner Carol Parker said the project will tackle engineering, permits and site design first, along with a traffic impacts analysis. She expects those details to be completed by December, and estimated that construction could begin next spring when weather permits.

The project will go before the Warrenton Planning Commission.

Parker acknowledged that Walmart can be a controversial topic. Detractors have attacked the big box chain for its negative effect on small businesses, among other issues.

"I know that there are people who think Walmart will decimate the area," she said.

But Parker said the new retail choices offered by Walmart and the new Costco [under construction now in Warrenton] will give residents and visitors affordable choices in a difficult economy.

"When you have a family with four children who is barely making it," she said, "the last thing you want [as a parent] is to have to choose between who of your children is going to get that new pair of pants because pants cost \$30."

Parker said the new store will also offer groceries, and that means competition with area retailers.

"It will cause the other grocers to take notice of what they are charging," she said.

She said the arrival of Walmart on

the coast also will draw customers from communities in Washington state, who will come to Warrenton to avoid sales tax and city traffic.

"We need retail businesses here that will serve a variety of income levels," Parker said.

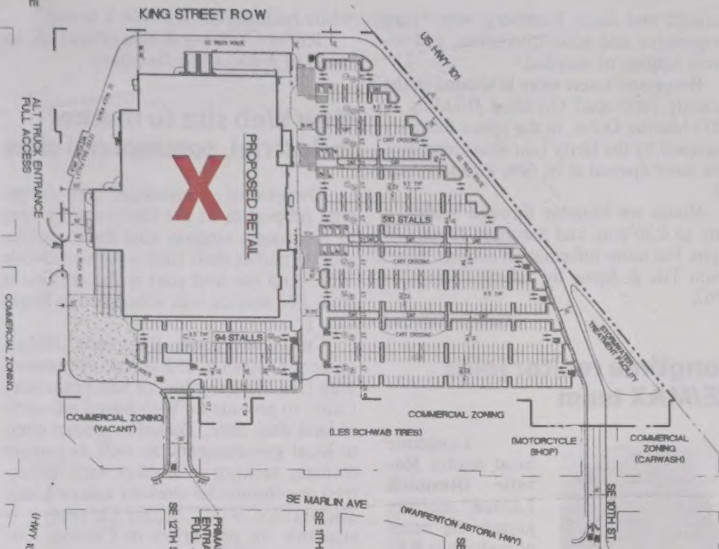
The 15-acre Walmart development site plan provides for more than 153,000 sq. ft. of retail space, and over 600 parking spaces.

The construction project to build the store will create about 200 temporary jobs, and the store will employ about 300 people.

The store will take about a year to build.

There are about 16 Walmarts within 100 miles of Astoria, but all are inland clustered around the I-5 corridor.

Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. operates more than 8,000 stores in 15 countries. The company Web site lists its sales at \$401 billion for FY 2009. Walmart employs more than 2.1 million people.



This conceptual site plan by PacLand Engineering shows the location and layout of a new Walmart to be constructed in Warrenton. CRBJ made the addition of the red "X."

Walmart comes to Warrenton

Welcome Walmart

Well, I'm glad to have a Super Walmart here ("Walmart pops out of the box," *The Daily Astorian*, Sept. 21).

For all who are saying that Walmart will hurt other companies: Well, if you love those high-priced stores, dump your money there. But those of us who have limited money welcome the help. If you don't like it, don't go and shop there.

But I bet all those who bash Walmart will be there shopping and loving the prices. Welcome, Walmart.

MONICA FERRELL
Seaside

9-23-2009

Sad news

If you want to buy cheap stuff, then Walmart is the store for you ("Walmart pops out of the box," *The Daily Astorian*, Sept. 21). But in my opinion, it's about the worst thing that can happen to our area.

Walmart has a well documented history of coming into a community and driving local stores out of business. Walmart is not local, their profits will be sent back to their corporate headquarters and not invested locally. Local stores and businesses are owned by local people, our neighbors who have a stake in our community.

This is sad news for Astoria and our local area.

RICH HOFFMAN
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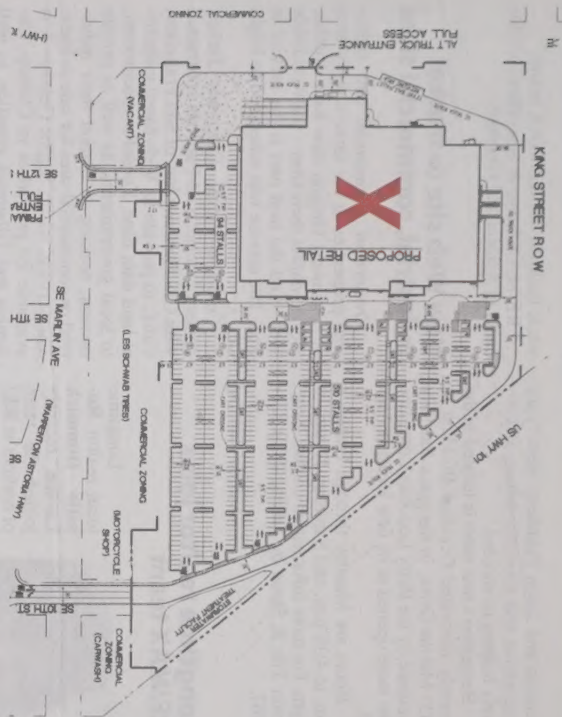
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RICH HOFFMAN

Astoria

9-23-2009

Our treasure

Once again, the esteemed officials have sold out the truly valuable resources of our area in trade for the empty promises and fuzzy logic of corporate America ("Walmart pops out of the box," *The Daily Astorian*, Sept. 21). It amazes me that some people in this area appear blind to the fact that entities such as Walmart and liquefied natural gas are not being pushed through because they would benefit this area. No. In fact it is the opposite. They are degrading our area in order to line the pockets of stockholders and corporate executives.

But what about the 300 supposed jobs that Walmart will bring? Tell me, when Walmart comes, will everyone start eating more food? Will we start needing more TVs? Will we start needing more flowers to plant? No. Profits will simply be shifted from other stores (frequently locally owned) to Walmart. And what happens when other businesses start losing profits? Layoffs.

It doesn't take a genius to figure out that a finite number of people's spending can only support a finite number of jobs. In the end it will be a wash - except that now we'll be sending even more money out of the area, and we'll have one more eyesore. Tell me, why doesn't a famous area such as Napa or Sonoma Valley allow, let's say, a coal power-plant to be erected right smack in the middle of wine country? Why don't they? Because they realize that the real value of the

area would be diminished by adding such a plant.

When will people wake up and realize that our area has more to offer than just easily corruptible, shortsighted officials and land owners who seem to all be wearing signs that say "rape us for \$\$\$."

No doubt, people such as Martin Nygaard, our "wonderful" Port commissioners, and the people in charge of letting this Walmart fiasco get through, would be fine if U.S. Highway 101 from Astoria to Newport was an endless run of mini-malls and big-box stores, and our waterfront resembled that of Longview, Wash. All provided they got their share.

Our waterfront, our coastline, our historic towns, our natural areas: that's our treasure. That's our resource. If you can't see that, then frankly, you don't deserve to live here.

JAMES "BUCKY" POTTSCHMIDT
Warrenton

Walmart = local business

All righty now, let the Walmart bashing begin ("Walmart pops out of the box," *The Daily Astorian*, Sept. 21).

Personally, I welcome a Walmart in our area. I will be glad to shop there rather than drive to Longview, Wash., and leave my dollars in Washington. I would rather support a local business that hires local folks.

JOYCE MOORE
Astoria

Diminishing new returns

Three hundred new jobs would be good, but at what cost ("Walmart pops out of the box," *The Daily Astorian*, Sept. 21)? How many small businesses will this put under?

How will Warrenton taxpayers fare? The new projects already in place have cost them a bunch. As the cost of additional infrastructure exceeds new additions to the tax base, the point of diminishing returns is met.

What about traffic? U.S. Highway 101 is already tedious at the height of the season. Can a predominately two-lane scenic highway handle the influx that will surely come?

EDGER HUMPHREY
Astoria

Bring 'em on

I am delighted to learn that another big box store is coming to the area like Walmart ("Walmart pops out of the box," *The Daily Astorian*, Sept. 21). This area may just join the 21st century, after all.

Now, if only they will also get some quality family restaurants to join them such as Applebee's, Olive Garden, Outback Steakhouse, Marie Callender's, Red Lobster, McGrath's Fish House, Red Robin, Elmer's, Denny's, Wendy's, or even an Arby's. The best of all would be a Cracker Barrel Restaurant - the tourists would love it.

While we are at it, a quality bookstore would be a magnificent addition. Barnes and Noble or Borders anyone?

HOWARD DOWNEY
Warrenton

Reasonable prices

We are extremely happy to hear the news of A Walmart being built in Warrenton ("Walmart pops out of the box," *The Daily Astorian*, Sept. 21). We are on a limited income, as are a lot of other senior citizens. We make a trip to Longview, Wash., every two weeks or so to shop at Walmart to get things that are not available here at a reasonable price.

SUE and JERRY CASHEROS
Warrenton

Outrage off the charts

I knew it. I bloody knew it. So is there any way of stopping them ("Walmart pops out of the box," *The Daily Astorian*, Sept. 21)?

Portland and several other communities around Oregon and the continent, especially Canada, have stopped this appalling dynasty (die-nasty?) from going ahead with their blights on the landscape and slave-wage mentality. I'm not a citizen but I'd be glad to add my voice to any group which tries to stop this store and go after the city of Warrenton for stonewalling all inquiries and not instigating a public review, resulting in this sudden "revelation."

By the way, I increasingly wonder what manner of people are running Warrenton. For instance, they have been sabotaging all attempts by the city of Gearhart to build their own water treatment plant for several years now, as Warrenton sells Gearhart their water supply. Now we get this sudden immoral and out-of-all-proportion imposition on the Columbia/Youngs Bay wetlands area, seemingly out of the blue. I propose that the entire cabal of city fathers and city management should be investigated for cronyism and selling out.

Again, where is the demographic justification for this gigantic latter-day tramp steamer and plague on the quality of life for which many people move to the North Coast? Go to a Walmart somewhere else and try to imagine superimposing a building of this scale on the area in question. Then think "concrete canyon" effect.

And jobs - unless you are wantonly ignorant, or have been living in a cave in the Cascade Range for several years, you must surely be aware that Walmart doesn't employ people, but rather imposes a cheap and jingoistic, almost Orwellian "1984" set of morés on "associates," and are masters in the dubious art of avoiding paying benefits and granting sick leave, necessary time off and other bottom-feeding measures to spend as little as possible on worker welfare, including stridently anti-union rhetoric and actions.

Many, many "associates" have allegedly

9-25-2009

lost their lousy jobs for even attempting to organize for better wages and conditions, and are treated like dispensable cannon-fodder, especially in economically challenged regions. I'd personally rather be unemployed than be associated with these people. I'm "self-exploited," by the way.

This is in complete apposition to Costco, who has excellent benefits and wages and subsequently one of the lowest employee turnovers in the U.S. And we already have a Costco in the same area, immediately adjacent to a large Fred Meyer. So can somebody enlighten me exactly where a Walmart fits in, or what gap in supply services it might provide?

What with the push for liquefied natural gas, and now this piece of corporate/city council skullduggery, my "outrage-o-meter" is off the charts. Surely we can stop 'em.

BRIAN JOHNSTONE
Nehalem

Rest in peace

Re: Walmart coming to Warrenton ("Walmart pops out of the box," *The Daily Astorian*, Sept. 21).

Help. We're bleeding. And we can't get up.

The city of Warrenton just stabbed us all – our community has about a year left to live. Rest in peace, Astoria/Seaside/North Coast/Long Beach (Wash.) Peninsula. Rest in peace.

MONICA SOLORIO-SNOW
Astoria

Paper withholds letters

In the Friday, Sept. 11 issue of *The Daily Astorian*, on page 5A, there was a full quarter page used to advertise for the Open Forum. In that advertisement was the claim that "A good newspaper is a two-way street. You learn from us and we learn from you." Let me be the first to say, "What a farce."

Anti-liquid natural gas letters far outweigh the pro-LNG letters, not because they are not written, but because they are not published. It sickens me to watch how *The Daily Astorian* is used to support the editor's own personal views and agendas.

The editor chooses to publish sappy letters such as the ones written by Joe Miltenberger ("Fishing among tankers," *The Daily Astorian*, Sept. 11) and Anne Phillips ("Where to shop," *The Daily Astorian*, Sept. 11). Miltenberger seems to think a fish of a lifetime will be lost due to LNG tanker traffic on the Columbia River. Phillips won't shop at any local stores that support LNG or Bradwood landing.

Let me remind the editor, Miltenberger, Phillips and all of Astoria and Clatsop County of one simple fact: Astoria was built by waterfront industry. Shame on all of you for forgetting that.

Bradwood Landing will create many family-wage jobs for our local economy. There will be plant operators, millwrights, elec-

tricians and security jobs at the plant. Warrenton, Astoria, Knappa and Clatskanie will get full-time firefighters. There will be three tractor tugs to guide the ships upriver, each tug having full crews.

There will be jobs for three-plus years for construction workers while the plant is being built. Yes, these jobs will go away once the plant is completed, but that's what construction workers do – they finish one project, then move on to the next. That's hundreds of construction workers spending money in our local economy for three years.

Ms. Phillips, I hope you have to drive 100 miles to buy groceries because any local store is crazy not to support family-wage jobs. Mr. Miltenberger, you need to tighten that star drag on your reel and support families and family-wage jobs. I am absolutely sickened by the "I have mine" attitudes.

A special thank you goes out to the county commissioners who are facing a recall. Thank you for supporting family-wage jobs. You are my heroes.

PAUL JOHNSON
Knappa

Managing Editor's Note: *The Daily Astorian* is delighted to publish letters about many topics, including the liquefied natural gas controversy – pro and con – and certainly does not select them for publication according to whether the newspaper agrees with the viewpoint. Letter writers must be contacted to verify the writer's identity and letters are published if they meet the criteria for length and are not extreme personal attacks, obscene or potentially libellous, and do not contain claims that cannot be verified. Preference is given to local writers. We hope this clarifies the issue.

Texas is messing with us

Under the guise of creating new jobs, the liquefied natural gas Texan entrepreneurs have managed to shatter the peace in our once cohesive community, buying their way into the very core of our values.

How sad to read the insidious remarks in Anita Amick's letter attacking Jim Scheller ("Sour grapes," *The Daily Astorian*, Sept. 11). He and his wife, Jan, have done so much to enhance our community through their environmental endeavors. Their tireless volunteer work has gone unnoticed by many, as they don't toot their own horns, and that is precisely why Scheller did not win the election.

Amick and the rest of the "silent minority" who have caved to LNG had best remain silent, lest they cook the golden goose that has provided them with the economic support in their local businesses.

Don't mess with Texas? Don't mess with Oregonians.

9-25-2009
TERRIE REMINGTON
Astoria

9-24-2009

Can local retailers survive Walmart?

The big box discounter will make a splash, but ignore the fabric of our communities

Everyone is talking about the new Warrenton Walmart.

Is it cause for celebration, with cheaper prices and 300 jobs?

Will it drag small local retailers into the black abyss like a sleepy fisherman with his boot caught in a line? Do our communities' opinions about any of this mean a darn thing?

Addressing the last question first, if you Google "Stopping Walmart," 21.1 million results pop up. Read further and you will see that precious few towns have successfully resisted. Emphatically, Warrenton will not be one of them.

Clatsop County and Warrenton leaders are uninterested in saying anything but "yes" to big box retailers. Warrenton made its Faustian bargain with discount mass merchandisers long ago, while it was the county's 2007 sale of 75 acres to Seattle developers that laid the groundwork for the huge new shopping complex now taking shape across from Home Depot.

Is it even fair to regard Walmart's arrival as a negative? The answer is complicated. Some consumers will appreciate having another discount store in the area, selling inexpensive groceries and Chinese-made goods. Walmart may stretch consumers' paychecks a bit.

We should be clear-headed about Walmart's lack of interest in our communities. To be sure, the company will hand out money upon its grand opening.

That is the Walmart gimmick. But the company's stores will not be consistent, long-term contributors to the fabric of our communities or players in the organizations that hold our towns together. They are only about discounting. It is surprising that a family with such deep roots in this county has opened the door to a retailer that is renowned for gutting main streets. Target would have been a more palatable choice.

Local retailers can survive Walmart, if they are smart and adopt effective marketing strategies. Robert Spector, author of *The Mom & Pop Store: How the Unsung Heroes of the American Economy Are Surviving and Thriving*, offers this advice:

- Commit to your community. Be a good citizen. This means being visible. Make heartfelt investments of time and concern of the kind that keep kids in band uniforms. Serve on the planning commission. Write letters to the editor. Be the kind of neighbor even the undertaker will mourn when your time comes.

- Find ways to adapt and be competitive. Don't think of people as consumers. Your customers want stronger connections to our own towns. We want to be recognized, respected and offered products that excite us with quality, value, local sourcing, ethical management.

If we act on these suggestions, many of us will prosper despite Walmart.

Walmart's good impacts 10-16-2009

I seldom write letters to the editor but Marcia Fenske needs a reply ("Lack of benefits," *The Daily Astorian*, Oct. 9). Her major objection to Walmart seems to center around low wages and benefits, or lack thereof.

Fenske obviously has never held or applied for a job with the "local merchants" she espouses to protect. Very few local merchants in Clatsop County offer benefits of any kind to their employees, nor do they offer vacations (paid or otherwise) or health benefits. Even Safeway and Fred Meyer pay only minimum wage to their employees, and you must work 20 hours or more per week to get any health benefits, etc.

Rather than drive wages "down" as Fenske alleges, it is more likely to force other majors to pay more in the face of a shrinking labor pool. The struggling local employees of our local businesses surely will benefit from the lower prices offered. Her arguments are as logical as the other letters supporting *The Oregonian* editorial on your county commissioner recalls.

BOB TRUMBULL
Seaside

The news that Wal-Mart will soon arrive on the North Coast has likely sent shivers through small retailers around the region that sell the kinds of products sold by the big box discount giant.

The challenge for such businesses quickly becomes how to maintain and ultimately thrive in the face of a formidable competitor.

But is there really room for small fry once Wal-Mart comes to town?

According to the Dennis Company, a locally-based hardware business with branches in Aberdeen, Raymond, Long Beach, Montesano and Elma - the answer is an emphatic "yes!"

But it takes some planning and care, said Randy Dennis, co-owner and vice-president of Dennis Company.

Dennis gave a presentation at the October meeting of the Astoria Rotary Club, entitled, "Turning up business in a down economy."

He said one of the things that can set small businesses apart from big box purveyors is customer service.

"When somebody comes into our store they get excellent help," Dennis said. "We have knowledgeable employees - it's the greatest thing that will separate you from Wal-Mart."

He said when Dennis Company is looking to hire employees, they look for people with a positive outlook.

"If they come to our store with a good attitude, we can train them to do the work," Dennis said.

Dennis Company has 96 employees, all of whom are full-time. The company offers retirement, health insurance, an employee discount and other incentives to retain quality workers. He said rewarding employees who do well is key to keeping staff motivated to go the extra mile for customers.

Dennis said when Wal-Mart first arrived in the region and began competing with Dennis Company, the firm saw sales plunge initially, then rebound.

"It affected our store for 18 months, and then it wore off," he said. "Now sales are 60 percent better than they were."

Dennis acknowledged that revenues overall have been down during the recession.

"Flat is the new up," he joked, about sales numbers. But he urged entrepreneurs to stay upbeat. "It's not as scary out there as you think it is - people are starting to spend money again."

Dennis said small businesses can thrive even with big box competition nearby.

"Do things better and find out where your niche is," he said. "Change is constant; figure out your strengths."

Part of that niche is the positive experi-

ence many people seek by shopping in the smaller, more intimate environment in an owner-operated business. It's also less of a hassle to shop and park near a smaller store.

"People want to come in, get what they need, and get out," he said. "Not everyone wants to go to a big box store."

That's where high quality customer service can be all-important.

"I never let my employees turn down business," Dennis said. "I never let them say 'no' without going to another employee or supervisor."

Customer goodwill can make it possible for a small retailer to charge 2 to 3 percent more than a big box (essential for meeting the bottom line in small businesses,

which can't make a profit at heavily discounted prices).

"You can charge a little bit more if you're worth it," he said.

He advised business owners to keep a close watch on their financials, maintain an advertising presence, and use the Internet to their advantage through Web sites, blogs and email outreach to customers.

Overall, Dennis said some shoppers will always choose a big box first because it's cheaper, and that's OK. Others will seek out a smaller, locally-owned store for different reasons.

"The Wal-Mart customer is not our customer," he said. "Our customer wants customer service." ↑



Randy Dennis, co-owner and vice-president of Dennis Company, tells Astoria Rotary Club members about how small businesses can thrive in the face of big box competition.
Photo: Joanne Rideout

In the face of Wal-Mart
small businesses can thrive

Nov. 2009

WALMART OPINIONS

TO THE EDITOR:

The first voice I read from the local retail community about Walmart building a store here was from Linda Mendenhall; one of the apparel managers at the Warrenton Fred Meyer. The consensus sounded harmless enough: We welcome competition, bring it on. (The same attitude came from Tim Gannaway from GB Jewelers.)

But Fred Meyer and Costco are both stores that provide union and employee benefits. Do they think it's OK to treat employees the way Walmart does? I'd like to ask people who support Walmart if they would be willing to work overtime without getting paid (thinking that they are going to impress their boss by doing the extra work; then learn that the manager set it up that way to maximize the cost of hiring). This gives the employee a sense of false hope that they will be promoted.

It has been well documented that Walmart practices racism and sexism in their hiring practices. Countrywide, class action lawsuits have made the headlines against Walmart on these issues and more. If you don't want to think about how your dollar affects the community, then you probably support Walmart; but I think most businesses around this area know better; from experience!

Brenda Harper
Astoria

TO THE EDITOR:

I am all for a Walmart coming to Warrenton. I understand that it might hurt some businesses, but for me, a Walmart is a more affordable place to shop.

If companies want to try and stay in business, then they need to lower their prices. Look at all the companies that went out of business already, nobody can blame Walmart for that. Walmart will offer more jobs for this community.

I believe that having a Walmart would be good for us consumers who can't afford the high prices.

Bernice Lawrence
Warrenton

Roberts deserves our respect

TO THE EDITOR:

I am voting NO on the recall of Patricia Roberts because like all of her fellow commissioners, she deserves our respect and admiration for serving on our behalf in a thankless position when most of us would rather spend time with our families.

She has served with honor and honesty, and no one who does so need be removed before their appointed time.

Terry Miller
Warrenton

**Warrenton
Community Library**



Extreme prejudice

On a recent Saturday evening, a group of extremists met at the Cannery Pier Hotel with their cell phones. Their mission was to call Gearhart voters and urge them to recall Patricia Roberts.

This was not poll pushing, it was outright pushing. *The Daily Astorian* failed to mention this. It (the pushing) backfired: Roberts beat the recall by a wide margin. The recalls have accomplished nothing and turned many voters against their cause. How dumb is that?

Thanks to these extremists and their ilk, Clatsop County has been forced to conduct four special elections in the last two years. This vindictive, child-like behavior (the recalls) has diverted scarce public funds away from the actual needs of the community. The amount is \$40,000. It's disgusting.

The spiteful attacks on my daughter, Ann Samuelson, by *The Daily Astorian* were vicious. It's offensive when the newspaper prints lies to destroy someone. Ann will not be destroyed, however. I predict she will continue to be involved in county matters as a private citizen.

Robert Mushen has been appointed the new commissioner for District 5. He sounds like a real winner, who will be focusing on the needs of the county.

The liquefied natural gas controversy is way overblown. A couple of years ago, several bar pilots from our area visited the LNG site at Boston Harbor. They came back with rather glowing reports, and were immediately dumped on by the good old *Daily Astorian*. They were maliciously accused of planning to line their own pockets with the work the LNG ships would provide them. *The Daily Astorian* is always quick to come up with any insult or put-down its editors think will serve their purpose.

Ships carrying natural gas go up the Columbia River several times a week. There was a mill and a company town at the proposed LNG Bradwood site on the Columbia. There were no pollution controls in place. It didn't bother the fish. The mill was active for 100 years.

It's amazing how much some of these people from elsewhere think they know. They obviously don't know that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the state of Oregon will make the decision on the LNG site.

What does it tell you when the county's two main projects are a food bank and a Goodwill store? While these are very worthwhile endeavors, they shouldn't define us. We need industry and we need jobs.

NANCY GRIMBERG
Astoria

12-18-2009 D.A.

Fair play (not)

I add my name to the growing list of citizens who do not want the business of a Walmart to taint our North Coast. I understand competition and have not opposed the mall in Seaside, the expansions of Fred Meyer, Costco and Lum's, nor the new businesses of Home Depot and Walgreens.

These businesses pay competitive wages, and some are very supportive of the tremendous number of nonprofits that survive by volunteer labor and money from businesses and individuals. With all the new money in Warrenton, I hope their volunteer groups have prospered.

My admiration for this area is for the support given to all the community things we have, and the tremendous time and dedication given by people to make "us" happen. Walmarts are notorious for taking the profits out of communities, paying substandard wages that put many of their employees at welfare status and putting small businesses out of business by lowballing product prices.

They will "give" 300,000 bottles of water to a storm ravaged area and then spend \$1 million advertising what a great supportive company they are hoping to make people believe how "good" they are so they buy more from their stores. They do not financially contribute to local causes in any significant way. They might ask their poorly-paid employees to donate to causes, and they do, but their corporate contributions are almost nonexistent.

Overhead is the cost of running your store. Profit for a small business is what is left for owners to live on. We dedicated 2 percent of our gross to give back to local groups. That decision lessened our income by more than 10 percent, but gave us great satisfaction. Walmart nationally boasted a spring quarter profit of \$3.44 billion dollars. That further helps the Walton children and wife to continue to be top five billionaires in the U.S. That amount of money sequestered in so few people is wrong for America. In my opinion, Walmart leads the race to the bottom of fairplay in the USA and we do not need that kind of greed here.

SARA MEYER
Astoria

12-18-2009 D.A.

Work in tandem?

It seems that the current debate over the big-box stores going into the area has become bogged down with all of the negative aspects of the propositions. A more positive approach would be to look at cities that have made both work very well together.

Communities such as Boulder, Colo., should be used as the model of how to make both historic districts and large commercial developments work together in a community. They have developed partnerships with the merchants, property owners and the community to ensure that the historic district is meeting the needs for all concerned.

It is because of this that I believe that all concerned citizens should demand that the resources being spent to block development, that will most likely happen anyway, be used to strengthen the historic downtown commercial district.

4-2-2010 JAMES SMETHURST
Hammond

Redirect that energy

I hope Walmart does build a store in this area, because then my wife and I won't have shopping needs that would require a Longview, Wash., trip for shopping ("Walmart is not yet a 'done deal,'" *The Daily Astorian*, Dec. 22). Some of the things we buy, we buy only at a Walmart store, regardless of where the Walmart store is located. Simple as that. When there's a Walmart store in this area, that will mean other local stores and restaurants will get more of our business, not less.

The "new" local group against Walmart, I betcha, is an old group that's been around a while. I mentioned this to another person a couple of days ago, and their comment was, "Yeah, some people just aren't satisfied unless they're unhappy."

The "group" ought to redirect their energy and do something productive like pack shoe boxes for Samaritan's Purse to help kids from needy families. Or, this "group" could establish and fund humanitarian efforts like the Kroger Company and the Walmart Foundation do, for just two examples.

Anything but more petty bickering and statistic slinging would be a breath of fresh air.

JOE JOHNSTON

Knappa

1-1-2010 OA.

Poll vs. petition

This is something I really don't like to do – my opinions don't usually matter. The folks who are so against Walmart are doing a disservice to this area that is becoming more distressed every week.

Three hundred possible jobs, whether they are part-time or not, will put food on someone's table or buy shoes for their kids. Students and retired people could work part-time. Are we so bigoted and pride-filled that we would let kids go hungry and and young people move out of the area because there is no work?

The little shops in town are great, they serve many of those who do not have basic needs, and the tourists who help us survive. They never seem to have what I am looking for when I do try to shop in them. Fred Meyer is the only game in town right now, and their parking lot is always full. I'm sure Walmart could help them out a little and keep prices down for those of us who need to count every penny.

I do not wish to start an argument with anyone about this, but how about a poll, instead of a petition, to see what the rest of us think?

ELLEN SOWINS

Warrenton

1-1-2010 OA.

Can't wait for Walmart

There might be 50 people in a committee who don't want a Walmart in Clatsop County, but I am certain that there are thousands of us in the Clatsop County area who do want Walmart here, and we can hardly wait for it to open up. Yay for more jobs and more places to shop.

RENAE MURPHY

Brownsmead

Walmart and traffic impacts

Last fall, after the official tourist season was over, I was completely surprised by more, not less traffic on the Youngs Bay Bridge. Vehicles were stopped on the round-

about, backed up on the bridge as well as at the Warrenton and Astoria entrances to the bridge. As far as I could tell, the bridge had not been raised, nor were there any accidents, construction or emergency equipment.

The reason for this pileup was the sheer number of cars, trucks, and recreational vehicles. Walmart plans to locate on U.S. Highway 101 and Marlin Avenue, adding volumes to the traffic congestion year-round. With this much traffic, how will the fire department, ambulance and police be able to get through?

The road, which now is designated a scenic byway, will surely lose this distinction. According to Walmart publicity, a whopping 7,400 car trips per day will be added to our highway and adjoining streets. This does not include the Walmart trucks delivering goods to the entrances at S.E. 12th Place, S.E. 12th Street and S.E. Marlin Ave. All this adds up to a big traffic flow problem in an already congested area and heavy road wear.

Since Walmart Super Centers stay open 24 hours, there is the real concern that traffic will be greatly increased at all hours of the day and night. With all this activity, where will the extra police and firefighters come from? How will Warrenton pay for the needed emergency help?

The Oregon Department of Transportation will do a traffic impact study which can be tied in with a land-use study. I request that ODOT go beyond just studying the section of highway abutting the purposed site, and take into account Harbor Street at U.S. Highway 101, the two-lane Youngs Bay Bridge and the roundabout on the Astoria side. Any way you slice it, I believe we will have traffic problems almost on the level of Portland and Vancouver, Wash., if Walmart is allowed to build in Clatsop County.

LORI DURHEIM

Astoria

OA

1-12-2010

Don't give them a break

It's that time of year again, tax time. How will Walmart affect our taxes?

Walmart, like other corporations, has a huge tax expense. It uses public funds for its private development. Walmart uses a number of methods to avoid paying its fair share of taxes. One method is procuring economic development subsidies from the state and local government. This translates into our taxes paying for one of the richest corporations in the world to set up shop here in Clatsop County.

Some of the other ways Walmart takes advantage is infrastructure assistance, tax increment financing, property tax breaks and enterprise zone (and other zone) status. Walmart receives large benefits from the states and the local municipalities where their stores are already located or where they plan on building.

The company uses public services, such as fire and police protection, public schools, public health for their employees and families, highways, streets and transportation systems to bring in their goods. By getting substantial tax breaks, thus not paying their fair share, the burden is shifted to local residents and businesses.

Property tax breaks are frequently given to Walmart projects by the county and local governments by agreeing to forgo revenues from property tax. The abatements can last up to 10 years.

Taxpayers can end up paying all or part of the costs necessary for making the land

usable, which includes paying for the construction of access roads, water and sewer lines and other forms of infrastructure. And let's not forget general grants, where some subsidies such as property tax abatements may not be permissible. Economic development officials can arrange for an outright grant of public money to Walmart.

For information, log on to <http://walmartwatch.com>

Talk about everyday low prices, Walmart will be actually costing us more than what we would save shopping there.

4-2-2010 LORI DURHEIM
OA. Astoria

Walmart is not yet a 'done deal'

Local group forms to fight proposed big-box store

By CASSANDRA PROFITA
The Daily Astorian

A new local group called Clatsop County Citizens for Responsible Development has formed to fight the proposed Walmart Supercenter in Warrenton.

About 50 people in the group are working to raise awareness of the negative effects Walmart could have on surrounding communities and to prevent the company from obtaining the permits it needs to begin construction.

Despite rumors to the contrary, group spokesman and Warrenton resident James Pottschmidt said the Walmart proposed for Warrenton is not a sure thing yet.

"The idea that it's a done deal, that everything's been taken care of, and that it's just a matter of time before it's there, is completely false," Pottschmidt said.

One specific permit the development still needs has attracted his group's attention: highway access approval from Oregon Department of Transportation. ODOT's access permit will determine the design of the commercial development — a key step in obtaining permission from the city of Warrenton to begin construction.

Warrenton Fiber Inc. owner Martin Nygaard laid the groundwork for the Walmart, clearing platted streets and obtaining wetlands fill permits for his 17-acre property west of the Les Schwab Tire Center off U.S. Highway 101. Walmart is buying the property and is working on the site design.

DA 12-22-2009

Continued from Page 1

The proposed 150,000-square-foot store would contain general merchandise, a full-size grocery, a garden center and around 650 parking spaces; it would take around nine to 12 months to build once ground is broken. Bill Wertz, divisional director of community and media relations for Walmart, said the Warrenton store would employ 300 people, but he doesn't know yet how many would be full-time associates.

Before the city of Warrenton signs off on Walmart's site design, the developers will need permission from ODOT to connect the retail center with state-owned highways. According to Steve Carter, ODOT District 1 manager, the developers know the project will need an access permit but have not applied for one yet. The approval process can be lengthy, he said.

The traffic study "could get real complex - hopefully not," said Carter. "It takes traffic engineers working day in, day out to do the analysis of how many cars turning at that location can do it without causing backups and how far down a driveway has to be to not affect the traffic signal. It's the same process with every development."

Warrenton City Manager Bob Maxfield said the city won't be able to approve a site design for the Walmart until ODOT has weighed in on the impact to traffic in the area.

"Once ODOT has completed their study as to how they can gain access

to the property, that will determine how they proceed with approvals and design," he said.

Warrenton City Planner Carol Parker said the Warrenton Planning Commission will have to sign off on the site design before construction can begin, and if the design doesn't conform to the city's development codes, she said, the company will need to apply for a variance.

Pottschmidt, a musician and part-time educator, said his group has been reading up on ODOT regulations, and he thinks the company will have trouble meeting state requirements for highway access.

Wertz said meeting traffic and environmental regulations "should not be a concern."

This month, Pottschmidt sent out letters to 350 businesses throughout Clatsop County outlining his group's concerns about the store's impacts on traffic, the environment and local businesses and asking for donations to help cover the cost of sending copies of a documentary — "Walmart: The High Cost of Low Prices" — to every household in Warrenton.

The letter says in most communities, Walmart moves in and siphons revenue from locally owned businesses and shopping centers.

"Part of the reason Walmart companies build such large stores is not because of a concurrent growth in demand but rather to deprive local businesses room in the market," it says. "As local stores close, towns, neighborhoods and residents suffer a

limited choice of goods provided by the single big box store and thus virtually eliminate competition."

Wertz said the group's claims are unfounded and that other communities have had the opposite experience - finding that the Walmart drew in additional shoppers and boosted sales in nearby stores.

"It's easy to look at other communities in Oregon and around the nation and see that many businesses, large and small, operate in close proximity to Walmart stores," Wertz said. "Many businesses have found that they benefit from the customer traffic that Walmart generates. Change is a fact of life in business, and Walmart is not the first large retailer to open in Warrenton, nor will it be the last."

Pottschmidt said some studies show that for every job gained from Walmart employment up to 1.4 jobs are lost in the surrounding community and that overall poverty levels "almost universally go up."

Wertz said he is not familiar with those studies, "but I would question their validity."

Pottschmidt said the responses his group has gotten from many local business owners is either the Walmart won't affect them or that even though they don't want the store in Warrenton there is nothing anybody can do to stop it.

"We're trying to get information out that not only is this a really bad thing for our area, but it's also something we do have the power to stop," he said.

THE DAILY ASTORIAN • TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2009

Walmart: Developers will need ODOT's permission on highway/store connection

12-22-2009

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THE DAILY ASTORIAN • TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2009

12-22-2009

Walmart bribery

The *New York Times* has revealed a disgusting pattern of Walmart using widespread bribery to get its way in Mexico, and of the corporation's shutting down an investigation into that. This is worth reading. Is this really the type of business operation Warrenton wants? Are these the kind of people Warrenton officials want to do business with? I don't want that kind of corrupt conduct poisoning our area.

Here's an excerpt from the detailed article:

"*The Times*' examination reveals that Wal-Mart de Mexico was not the reluctant victim of a corrupt culture that insisted on bribes as the cost of doing business. Nor did it pay bribes merely to speed up routine approvals. Rather, Wal-Mart de Mexico was an aggressive and creative corrupter, offering large payoffs to get what the law otherwise prohibited. It used bribes to subvert democratic governance — public votes, open debates, transparent procedures. It used bribes to circumvent regulatory safeguards that protect Mexican citizens from unsafe construction. It used bribes to outflank rivals.

"Through confidential Wal-Mart documents, *The Times* identified 19 store sites across Mexico that were the target of Wal-Mart de Mexico's bribes. *The Times* then matched information about specific bribes against permit records for each site. Clear patterns emerged. Over and over, for example, the dates of bribe payments coincided with dates when critical permits were issued. Again and again, the strictly forbidden became miraculously attainable."

This article, part of a detailed series with maps and very specific information, is at <http://tinyurl.com/nyt-walmart>

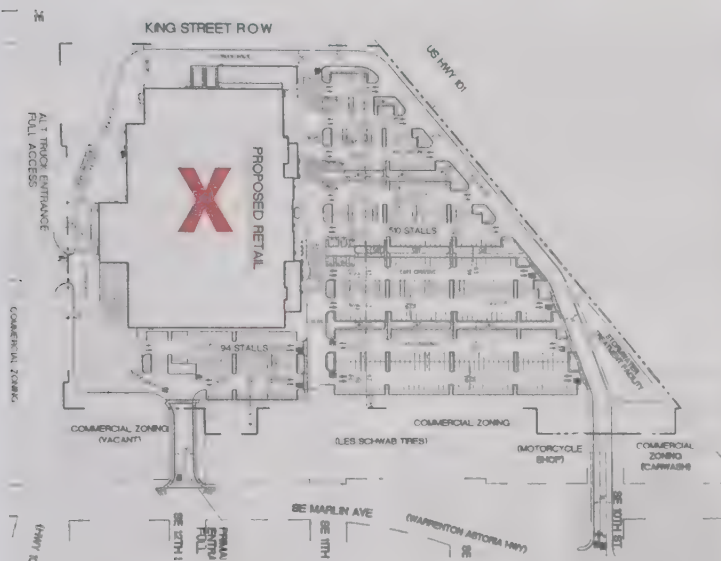
I hope it's not too late for Warrenton to deny Walmart a place on the coast.

LAURIE CAPLAN

Astoria

12.28.2012

Oct - 2009

by Joanne Rideout
joanne@crbjjournal.com

This conceptual site plan by PaLand Engineering shows the location and layout of a new Walmart to be constructed in Warrenton. CRBJ made the addition of the red "X."

Walmart comes to Warrenton

The rumors are true.

A new Walmart Supercenter slated for construction in Warrenton will take shape along U.S. Highway 101 sometime next year, on property near Marlin Avenue behind the Les Schwab Tire Center.

It would be the first Walmart store on the North Coast of Oregon.

Warrenton City Planner Carol Parker said the project will tackle engineering, permits and site design first, along with a traffic impacts analysis. She expects those details to be completed by December, and estimated that construction could begin next spring when weather permits.

The project will go before the Warrenton Planning Commission.

Parker acknowledged that Walmart can be a controversial topic. Detractors have attacked the big box chain for its negative effect on small businesses, among other issues.

"I know that there are people who think Walmart will decimate the area," she said.

But Parker said the new retail choices offered by Walmart and the new Costco [under construction now in Warrenton] will give residents and visitors affordable choices in a difficult economy.

"When you have a family with four children who is barely making it," she said, "the last thing you want [as a parent] is to have to choose between who of your children is going to get that new pair of pants because pants cost \$30."

Parker said the new store will also offer groceries, and that means competition with area retailers.

"It will cause the other grocers to take notice of what they are charging," she said.

She said the arrival of Walmart on

the coast also will draw customers from communities in Washington state, who will come to Warrenton to avoid sales tax and city traffic.

"We need retail businesses here that will serve a variety of income levels," Parker said.

The 15-acre Walmart development site plan provides for more than 153,000 sq. ft. of retail space, and over 600 parking spaces.

The construction project to build the store will create about 200 temporary jobs, and the store will employ about 300 people.

The store will take about a year to build.

There are about 16 Walmarts within 100 miles of Astoria, but all are inland clustered around the I-5 corridor.

Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. operates more than 8,000 stores in 15 countries. The company Web site lists its sales at \$401 billion for FY 2009. Walmart employs more than 2.1 million people. ↑

Walmart: An interested citizen of the community

By KAL PATEL
For The Daily Astorian

For more than two decades, Walmart stores have partnered with cities, counties, ODOT and Oregonians to bring customer choice to communities around the state.

In mid-September we were pleased to announce our hopes to bring a new Walmart to Warrenton that will help people save money and live better.

The Warrenton Walmart will offer a full-service grocery department, direct access to \$4 generic prescriptions, and the more than 60 traditional departments featured in all of our stores. We believe we are presenting the North Coast with an ideal store in terms of size, orientation and merchandise and we will continue partnering hand-in-hand with city staff throughout the application process.

As our plans are under way, I wanted to address a couple statements from *The Daily Astorian's* recent editorial "Can local retailers survive Walmart?" The article accused Walmart of being disinterested in the local community, a claim that couldn't be farther from the truth.

Walmart considers itself a citizen of the communities we serve. We provide good jobs for people who need either full- or part-time work or management positions and we offer many opportunities for growth and promotion. More than 10,000 Ore-



Kal Patel

gonians are Walmart associates, with those working hourly schedules earning an average of \$12.12 per hour. Many members of management in our company started as cashiers or clerks. The Warrenton Walmart could offer as many as 300 jobs, effectively keeping more dollars in the local area.

Walmart reaches out
Walmart is involved with schools,

Walmart is involved with schools, youth programs, at food banks, as Special Olympics volunteers, at SOLV clean-up days.

youth programs, at food banks, as Special Olympics volunteers, at SOLV clean-up days, and this year we awarded 80 Oregon teachers with gift cards for classroom supplies through the Teacher Rewards program. These are just a few of the many programs in which we are involved throughout the state.

Last fall, Walmart committed \$250,000 to the Oregon Food Bank Network and participates in the continuous Fresh Alliance food recovery

program, donating close-dated meat, dairy and produce that would have otherwise been destroyed, every day. This program rescued and delivered 750,000 pounds of food from the shelves of our Oregon Walmart stores to the tables of struggling families and individuals since the beginning of the year. The Nyssa Community Food Pantry, one of many recipients, counts 5,762 pounds of food on their tables through these efforts.

Walmart associates come from all walks of life. They are invested in the places where they live, work and play just like the company they work for. Walmart stores traditionally award grants all year, as well as through the Wal-Mart Foundation State Giving Program. In total, Walmart and its

a Google search of Walmart opposition, but failed to mention that a Google search of Walmart support yields 130 million results. However, we would argue that a better way of determining Walmart's interest in the local community is to look at what we've accomplished in the Oregon locations where we do business. The real story includes the support we've lent to education, hunger relief and other charitable causes, jobs we've maintained and added, the emphasis we've placed on volunteerism and the efforts we've made to run smarter, more energy-efficient and sustainable stores that provide locally grown organic produce choices far beyond the "Chinese-made goods" mentioned in this paper. In fact, Walmart is the largest purchaser of product manufactured in the U.S.

I would urge your readers to consider what Walmart can bring to the Warrenton community before dismissing our company, our people or our commitment to the communities in which we operate. We encourage anyone interested in learning more about how Walmart weaves into the fabric of local communities to visit our Web site (www.walmartstores.com/communitygiving). We look forward to an honest discussion with the people of Warrenton and believe we would make a great addition to the community.

Kal Patel is Wal-Mart Stores Inc. regional general manager – vice president for store operations in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Alaska and Hawaii.

foundation contributed \$3.2 Million to Oregon nonprofit organizations during 2008.

Cities such as Medford and Eugene have had a Walmart presence for more than 15 years. With an influx of national retailers, as well as locally owned stores that carry specialty items – they also have shopping districts that continue to thrive.

The editorial that appeared in your paper made a point of mentioning the 21.1 million results that come up in

Addition of Wal-mart to the area sparks comparison shopping between grocery outlets



by Nick Bjork
nick@crbizjournal.com

With the recent news of a proposed Wal-Mart in Warrenton, there have been questions voiced by people who are concerned about its affect on area business. Swirling around those coffee-shop conversations have been bold statements about Wal-Mart pricing as compared to other "big box" stores.

To try to answer those questions for our readers, CRBJ set out this month to compare the prices of ten name-brand items between a Portland Wal-Mart (Southeast 82nd and Powell), three Fred Meyers (the Warrenton, Fred Meyer and two in Portland, the downtown store and another located on Southeast 39th and Hawthorne) and four Safeways (Astoria, Seaside and two in Portland, downtown and Southeast 28th and Hawthorne).

The ten items ranged from food to cleaning supplies. The standard price was recorded and didn't include automatic price reductions or sale prices. All prices were recorded in a 24-hour period.

When first looking over the price comparisons a few things jump off of the paper. One, prices are very consistent between the same stores in different locations. So, prices at Fred Meyer in downtown Portland are generally the same as the prices at Fred Meyer in Warrenton. This is true for Safeway, as well.

Another consistency is that besides Budweiser beer and Kellogg's Frosted Flakes, Fred Meyer is slightly cheaper than Safeway.

"Items are priced by the market share leader in the specific area," said Bert Hambleton, a grocery consultant from Issaquah, Wash. "So, prices are usually going to be slightly less at Fred Meyer in Oregon, and slightly less at Safeway in Washington."

Hambleton goes on to point out that Wal-Mart marches to a different drummer than most regional grocery outlets. Wal-Mart is considered a mass-merchant, buying large amounts of product directly from manufacturers. Thus, the business simply has more products that they bought at a lower price, which allows it to spread the pricing margins over a wider-array of products, keeping a majority of them lower than other stores.

As is noted by the price comparisons,

Wal-Mart has lower prices than other stores. The only inconsistency to that is with cheese; Wal-Mart only offers its in-house "Best Value" brand. Two pounds of the Best Value brand is noticeably more expensive than two pounds of the name brand Tillamook Cheddar at Fred Meyer and Safeway.

"If you talk to the store [representatives] they will tell you that higher prices are due to transportation costs and more expensive real estate, but that is simply not true," he said. "The deep dark secret is that it's all based around competition. Wal-Mart will lower prices at the stores within its general vicinity."

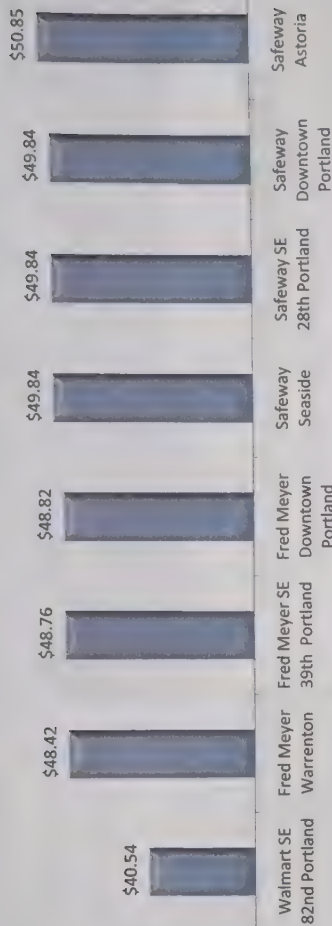
Yet, there aren't lower prices at the Fred Meyer and Safeway in the vicinity of Wal-Mart compared to those stores that don't have to compete with Wal-Mart.

Another interesting tidbit is that due to competition, these stores try to differentiate between one another. For example, Best Foods Mayonaisse comes in 30 oz. containers at Safeway, 40 oz. containers at Fred Meyer and 28 oz. containers at Wal-Mart. Yet, they are still priced similarly to the size differences.

All-in-all, Wal-Mart offers lower prices than the other stores. But, the claim that prices are lower in Portland because there is a Wal-Mart in the area, simply isn't true. Pricing is important, but as the success of Fred Meyer and Safeway shows, people shop at different stores for different reasons. ↑

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Nick's Shopping Bag



by Nick Bjork
nick@crbizjournal.com

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Walmart: Will it be good or bad for the local community?



Laura Snyder from Lucy's Books in Astoria, Tim Gannaway from GB Jewelers, and a representative from Oregon Public Broadcasting held a live radio interview at Serendipity Caff  in Warrenton regarding the impact Walmart will have on the local community. (Photo by Bruce Dustin)

**By Samantha Larsen
and Bruce Dustin**

How do you feel about Walmart? Do you love it in a big city? How about in the small town that you call home?

Recently Oregon Public Broadcasting (OPB) held a live radio broadcast from Serendipity Caff  in downtown Warrenton, asking opinions about the Walmart scheduled to go into the local community.

Local business owners, Laura Snyder from Lucy's Books in Astoria, and Tim Gannaway from GB Jewelers in Warrenton, were both asked their opinion on the news that Walmart will build a 158,000 square foot store in Warrenton.

Tim's brother, Jim, in a phone interview after the show, pointed out, "We welcome competition. We feel blessed to be in a country where our business can compete in a capitalistic sense. And we feel certain that people would rather buy locally made jewelry as opposed to that which is made in China. It's a question of quality. Walmart and stores of their ilk tend to carry varying levels of quality. Some of their products are of a very low grade. We at Gannaway Brothers welcome the competition. If Walmart is gunning for us—trying to put us out of business, we'd just like them to know that we're up to the challenge. We're gunning for them. We're willing to match our goods against theirs anytime."

Laura Snyder from Lucy's Books took a little different approach. She, several times in a phone interview,

referenced her comments with, "This is very well documented." She cautions that there is "a cost to extremely low prices." She pointed out that "Walmart is known especially as one of those large chains that engage in predatory pricing—purposefully forcing the small locals out of business." And she admitted that "this is a much bigger issue than just my shop. This will effect the community—the fabric of the community."

Warrenton High School students Mollee Bighill and Brittany Nyberg were asked to take part in the broadcast, also.

Mollee said, "I am against Walmart because they probably won't hire local people to work in their store. Just like other recent chains that have moved in, they will ship people in to work here and deny the locals."

Brittany disagreed. "I'm totally for Walmart. It's going to give our local stores a run for their money, bring in more competition."

So, the question to be asked is, how do you feel about a huge mega-store like Walmart coming into the North Coast? Do you think it will possibly take income away from our local stores? Or will it add sorely needed jobs to the community?

Please voice your opinions by sending comments to The Columbia Press, P.O. Box 130, Warrenton, OR 97146, or via e-mail at: editor@thecolumbiapress.com.

The Columbia Press will publish your comments in future issues.

F.P. C.P.

11-6-2009

We deserve a break

Why is it that these people have nothing better to do than try to prevent a major business from coming to the Oregon Coast? ("Walmart is not yet a 'done deal,'" *The Daily Astorian*, Dec. 22)

A while back the city of Cornelius broke ground for a Walmart, the first on the west side of Portland metro area. Did you know the residents were there to greet and encourage this event? This is true, and it was printed in *The Oregonian*.

So why do people think Walmart will hurt the small businesses? What did Home Depot do to the other hardware merchants? Nothing.

It's about time the North Coast got a break from high-priced merchants. The committee to prevent Walmart from coming to our North Coast should just mind their own business and let good enough alone. In times to come, this will come back to bite them in the butt.

DA.1-8-2010 JOHN ROHRER
Ocean Park, Wash.

Residents Against Walmart ramps up

Group holds public meeting, gathers donations and plans to distribute anti-Walmart documentary

By CASSANDRA PROFITA
The Daily Astorian

Around 20 people attended a public meeting of the new group Clatsop Residents Against Walmart Wednesday.

The group sent out 350 letters to local businesses soliciting donations in November, and has made enough to distribute 2,244 copies of the documentary "Walmart: The High Cost of Low Prices" to households in Warrenton and Hammond Feb. 6 and 7.

Many local residents welcome the planned Walmart development in Warrenton. But CRAW members maintain that the store, proposed for a site near the intersection of U.S. Highway 101 and Marlin Avenue, is "not a done deal," but it is a "dumb deal."

CRAW's leaders say they are concerned about negative impacts the retail giant could have on the county. They cite studies and point to cases where developing a Walmart has resulted in net job losses for surrounding communities, has cost taxpayers money in subsidized public services, and has driven locally owned companies out of business.

Several Astoria businesses are supporting the county's nascent anti-Walmart movement, including the Blue Scorchers Bakery, The Ship Inn, Astoria Coffeehouse, Andrew & Steve's Cafe, and The Columbian cafe and theater.

1-28-2010 See WARMART, Page 3

Walmart: Traffic is of concern to some opposed to Walmart

Transportation. Fighting that permit is one of CRAW's top priorities.

ODOT's access permit will determine the design of the commercial development - a key step in obtaining permission from the city of Warrenton to begin construction. The Warrenton Planning Commission will have to sign off on the site design before construction can begin, and if the design doesn't conform to the city's development codes, the company will need to apply for a variance.

Before announcing which retailer

she doesn't like "the stragglers it attracts," including chain restaurants like the Olive Garden and Applebees, which would hurt locally owned restaurants.

Astoria resident Oliver Yackley said he's worried about Astoria businesses and the possibility that more buildings downtown will be left vacant after Walmart moves in.

"It's bad enough we have the Flavel buildings," he said. "It would be a sad scene to see our little town die ... but you will have a lot of parking."

Continued from Page 1

CRAW spokesman James Pottschmidt addressed the group Wednesday with his worries about the additional traffic north and south of the development along U.S. Highway 101 - particularly on the new Youngs Bay Bridge.

"Traffic is going to be a nightmare," he said, "unless ODOT wants to pay for a new bridge."

Among a few other approvals, Walmart still needs highway access approval from Oregon Department of

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On Wednesday, Astoria resident Ted Thomas said Walmart woos customers with loss-leader merchandise - items sold at a loss to the retailer - then charges more for other items in the store.

"People remember those loss-leaders," he said, "and they think that applies to all the prices."

Deborah McEuen of Astoria said

would take around nine to 12 months to build once ground is broken. The Warrenton store would employ 300 people, but not all would be full-time associates.

Many local residents like the idea of having a Walmart nearby. They say the jobs, low prices and foot traffic it offers will benefit the local economy. But Pottschmidt, a musician and part-

time educator, said according to the results of one study, the Walmart could end up costing the county 450 jobs - resulting in a net job loss. The devel-

would be moving in, Warrenton Fiber Inc. owner Martin Nygaard laid the groundwork for the Walmart, applying for the city approvals to clear platted streets and for the state permit to fill wetlands at his 17-acre property west of the Les Schwab Tire Center. In September, it was announced that Walmart is buying the property and developing the site.

The proposed 150,000-square-foot store would contain general merchandise, a full-size grocery, a garden center and around 650 parking spaces; it

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Get on with the future

I, for one, would like to say Walmart is welcome in our area. Right now we travel beyond our own counties, and sometimes even to other states, just to go to a Walmart.

Walmart will not hurt any of the surrounding businesses in our area. It will bring in a different slate of prices, and it will offer more variety of items. I shop in Washington and Oregon, and I also shop in numerous counties. I go to a Walmart wherever I travel, but I also shop local stores too.

These folks who are yelling over this are the same people who said Home Depot would do the same thing. Were they right? Home Depot created new jobs for many who couldn't find work elsewhere. Home Depot has offered variety, and lower prices on many items, yet, we still shop at our usual stores, anyhow.

Let us move forward and build this new store. I still shop all of my regular stores, and having more choices is a great idea. It will also boost tourism, not kill it. Tourists also love Walmart. Just think of the generated revenue

it will produce. People all up and down the coast will come to Walmart here to shop, then they'll go to the little stores and all of their usual stops, too.

As far as the streets and roads are concerned, it will only improve the existing (or nonexistent) roads. Let's just get on with progress and increase revenues in our area. We need the jobs, too. It will not hurt our area, it will help us. It will not change our shopping habits, it will only increase variety.

Tell me who it will put out of business? I don't get it. The stores that never made it to begin with won't be hurt, and the ones that have stood strong through the decades will remain strong. I know Deals Only is afraid of Walmart, but there really is no comparison there at all. I will always shop at Deals Only. Period.

One more positive thing: it may generate competition in the area known as "customer service." Lots of our local stores could use competition in that particular area. Rudeness and laziness are on the rise when it comes to wanting to help the customer. I, for one, say let's do it, and get on with our future. As they say, "A little competition never hurt anyone."

LISA GILLESPIE
Ocean Park, Wash.

Shopping choices

Here we go again - a small minority trying to block what will be good for the majority.

Walmart will bring customers from across the river who go to Longview, Wash., to shop. Some from this area do the same. They will come to Warrenton for all their shopping needs.

Walmart employs many full-time workers and some part-time, which is just great if you want a part-time job, and some do, you know. We need some shopping choices with good prices.

When Fred Meyer, Costco and Home Depot came, we heard the same complaints. Progress is good and you can't stop it. If you snooze, you lose,

DOROTHY HANSEN
Seaside

Loss of place

Maysville, Ky., is hardly thought of in Clatsop County, yet Maysville and Astoria have much in common. If Walmart is successful in establishing itself in Warrenton, a new and painful similarity will emerge.

Maysville, like Astoria, played a significant role in the settling of its geographic region, Astoria founded by John Jacob Astor, and Maysville having Daniel Boone among its founders. Each city lies on the shore of a significant river, Astoria on the Columbia, Maysville on the Ohio. Each prospered for many years as a shipping port, Astoria specializing in salmon, Maysville in hemp and tobacco.

Astoria links Oregon to Washington with an impressive bridge. Maysville connects Kentucky to Ohio with two significant bridges, one built in 1931, the other in 2001. On the Kentucky end of the bridges, the town rises from the riverside, with old houses perched on a steep slope, as does Astoria. Astoria claims Clark Gable as one of its famous residents; Maysville still celebrates the birth and celebrity of Rosemary Clooney and her nephew, George Clooney.

Steepled churches are conspicuous in the old town; the Catholic church is across the street and a block down from the Episcopal church in the heart of town. There is a unique old theater on the main street currently in the third stage of restoration. The current population is more than 9,000. Sound familiar? There is more.

Both cities have struggled in the past few decades to improve their downtown areas, to make the most of their historic structures and to attract retail commerce. Astoria has succeeded beyond hopes and expectations and can rely heavily on being a hub of tourism. Not so for Maysville. Commercial and residential development about three miles from town, along and adjacent to a major highway, began to drain the heart of the town.

Then came Walmart, the retail giant. Big enough to control both the quantity of packaging and the quality of products it sells, encouraging its employees, most of whom earn at or below a living wage, to contribute actively to charitable organizations and services while publicly claiming credit for its public-minded generosity. The monster store sapped the economic health of the surrounding communities and funneled large profits out of the town, the county and the state. Today, Maysville's downtown is almost lifeless. It is two steps away from becoming a modern ghost town.

When we welcome Walmart to Clatsop County, we invite the loss of place. It may take a few years, but it will surely happen. Most of downtown Astoria is at risk of seeing the blight of the Flavel block spread east as far as 16th Street, and possibly beyond.

Be careful what you wish for.

ALAN C. BATCHELDER
Seaview, Wash.

Walmart's generosity

It's great to know that Walmart has chosen to come to Clatsop County. I was born and raised in Astoria. I am grateful that any time in the past, when I asked Astoria merchants for help in support of a cause, donations for raffles and anything else that would promote the well-being of the community, they were very generous, and repeatedly so.

After living in Astoria for 40 some years, a few years ago I moved down the Oregon Coast, then to Oak Creek, Colo., for two years, and most recently to Crescent City,

Calif. I have to give credit to Walmart in Craig and Steamboat Springs, Colo., for their generosity in responding to my inquiry about meeting the needs of the nearby rural community of Oak Creek by donating a digital camera to the Oak Creek Police Department so officers could take photos for criminals' files.

In addition, when the town commissioners of fiscally challenged Oak Creek were made aware that the municipality's water department's pump had failed, Walmart helped all 700-plus residents of Oak Creek by donating funds to the town to purchase a new water pump - not an inexpensive donation.

When Oak Creek's police chief was told by Routt County social services that a low-income elderly woman was sleeping on her floor because she could not afford to buy a mattress, I approached the manager of the local Walmart about helping her rest more comfortably. He arranged for a donation sufficient to purchase a bed frame, mattress, box spring and bedding for her.

These examples seem to illustrate that Walmart's generosity is not limited to the community where the store is located. Walmart stores do help communities and community members when needs emerge, and are brought to the local store manager's attention, and the stores' philanthropic activity goes beyond a one-time event.

While some criticize Walmart's arrival in Northwest Oregon and focus on anticipated negative outcomes, remember that Walmart's generosity and commitment to being a good neighbor can help local communities, their residents and also the local schools. I saw it firsthand where I lived.

LUKE RUMMELL
Crescent City, Calif.

D.A. 1-8-2010

Walmart's labor lawsuits

Walmart announced in December 2008 it would pay as much as \$640 million to settle 63 lawsuits across the country over wage and hour violations.

In July 2009, in Washington state, Walmart agreed to pay up to \$35 million to settle a class action lawsuit on behalf of 88,000 workers who were forced to skip meals and rest breaks or were forced to work off the clock.

Evidence and testimony littered throughout the cases indicate a "corporate culture" and a systemic approach for cutting labor costs by dictating managers staff below the "preferred level" and rewarding managers for keeping labor costs down.

In a 2008 Minnesota verdict against Walmart, District Judge Robert King ruled that Walmart broke Minnesota labor laws more than 2 million times. During a 2006 trial in Pennsylvania that resulted in a \$78.5 million verdict against Walmart, two cashiers testified to being locked inside stores and forced to restock shelves before being allowed to leave.

The Washington cast presents a moral dilemma for anyone who shopped in a Walmart in the state of Washington between 1997 and February 2009. You have to accept the fact that you received lower prices on the goods you bought because Walmart was able to make up the difference by breaking the law when it came to its employees. That is the bottom line. That is why I won't shop in a Walmart.

If I was a Walmart shopper I would be alarmed by the recent December 2009 lawsuit in Pennsylvania where former and current employees are suing the retail giant because a store installed a surveillance camera in a unisex bathroom used by employees and customers. The attorney representing the plaintiffs says three of the employees were dismissed from their jobs after complaining about the camera. Look up and smile.

1-29-2010 PATRICK LINES
Seaside

Help from Walmart

With the inquiries about a Walmart coming to Warrenton, please let me provide my point of view to the topic.

Yes, the Walmart may bring some competition to the nearby stores, but it will also attract other people traveling to Walmart to stop at those very same stores on their way.

Walmart may also provide about 200 temporary jobs and employ around 300 people, plus it will help the community by giving specific equipment to those in need through both little and big donations.

With the economy the way it is, Walmart could also help the community out with their low prices for the families who simply do not have enough money to buy all the necessities needed for school, work and home life. Please remember, not everyone can afford today's high prices.

3-29-2010 KAYLA HEINZMAN
Astoria

Neighborly comments

While I was at the Warrenton City Commission meeting on July 13, one of the commissioners questioned why people from Astoria were there. Some people from Astoria were in attendance. Dick Hellberg asked one of us, who was addressing Chairman Gil Gramson, what interest and concern was it to someone who does not live in Warrenton. This was not the first time a similar comment was made concerning people from Astoria coming to the Warrenton meeting.

The subject at this particular meeting was the city of Warrenton wanting to hire a hearings officer for a land-use application as stated on the agenda. I am writing this letter to respond to Hellberg's comment.

First, your meeting is a public meeting and is, by Oregon law, open to the public regardless of where they may live. Second, actions of the city of Warrenton have impacts beyond city limits. Living on the South Slope near the Youngs Bay Bridge, I am within the blast zone for Oregon LNG's export terminal. I can see the site from my front windows. The lights from the terminal, which will be on 24 hours a day, will be highly noticeable, interfering with the view.

All the big-box stores emerging in Warrenton off the north/south main highway do have a serious effect on the flow of traffic. Walmart has estimated that 7,400 trips per day will be added to U.S. Highway 101 if they build their supercenter behind McCall's Tire Center on Marlin Avenue. As it is now, even in the fall and winter, there are traffic back-ups and delays due mostly to the number of vehicles going through the Astoria roundabout and crossing the two-lane draw bridge.

To challenge my right to go to a public meeting is unconscionable. I have never heard of a prerequisite to live within a city limits to be able to speak at a public meeting. Many of the developers who come before your commission do not live in Warrenton. How about the mayors of Astoria, Gearhart, Seaside and Cannon Beach? Will they be able to speak at your meeting?

I, for one, will continue to come to the Warrenton City Commission meetings, and speak at times, as long as there are decisions being made that effect me and our county.

7-23-2010 LORI DURHEIM
Astoria

Walmart benefits

I feel that having a Walmart store in Warrenton would be very beneficial to the community for many reasons. Some try to argue that Walmart would put the local stores out of business, but there are many residents in the community who can only afford to shop at discount stores, and don't shop at the high-priced local shops, anyway.

Also, having a discount store in the area will promote healthy competition in pricing; this will not be enough to put the local shops out, because they are able to calculate their revenue. We should not forget that having a Walmart store in Warrenton would also attract a lot of business to Clatsop County from other areas close by.

JENNIFER CHALLIS
Long Beach, Wash.

Keep Walmart out

I know that the buzz surrounding the topic has died down, but I'd like to reiterate the problems that a Walmart in Warrenton would cause.

Walmart is constantly being hit with fines and citations for its blatant disregard of environmental laws. It seems that the giant corporation finds it cheaper to just violate the law and pay the fine, instead of just taking standard ecological precautions.

Along with the environmental issues, Walmart is a regular target of state and federal lawsuits con-

3-11-2011

cerning the ill treatment of its staff. The superstore is known for forcing its hourly employees to work, unpaid, for large chunks of time. If we want to protect what makes our area unique, we need to keep Walmart out.

ALANA DARCHER
Naselle, Wash.

Shop locally

Astoria is one of the greatest towns to start your own business. Tourists love our Victorian-themed town, and locals appreciate the personal touch that local owners bring to their businesses.

I have worked for a few businesses and have found that with national corporations, the employees and customers are numbers rather than human beings. We need to keep in mind that by supporting local businesses we are not only helping out our friends and family, but we are keeping money in our town and community rather than supporting national companies, and not knowing where our money goes.

It takes a large amount of work, time and love to create a local business. I understand that many national stores bring job opportunities, but we must weigh the difference. Choose to go local more often than the alternative, if possible; your community will only benefit from the change.

KATIE J. BOGH
Astoria

DA 3-11-2011

POINT of view

*'What do you think
about Walmart
coming to
Warrenton?'*



"It's all right. I just think it's one more place to shop."

**Herbert Hickam
Knappa**

"I think it's about time. I really don't think it will hurt the small businesses — they survived Fred Meyer and all the rest. It will draw people out more to go shopping."

**Marilyn Falker
Seaside**

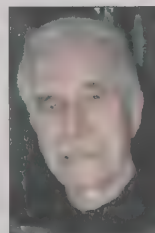


"It doesn't bother me because I shop in downtown Astoria as much as I can."

**Victoria Kerin
Astoria**

"I hate it. I never shop at Walmart. I'm just not a Walmart fan."

**Nancy McGuire
Rosburg, Wash.**



"It doesn't matter because they have the cheapest junk you can get and you get what you pay for."

**David Ambrose
Astoria**

Still no word on Walmart

by LeeAnn Neal
Coast River Business Journal

WARRENTON — Despite plenty of rumors on the street, the City of Warrenton has yet to receive an application or building plans for a Walmart Superstore.

"There's never been anything submitted to the city," confirmed Warrenton Planning Director Carol Parker. "There are a lot of rumors out there, but I have nothing formal and I don't know when I will."

Although the Coast River Business Journal had been contacting Walmart media relations representatives repeatedly for days, it did not receive a response before press time.

In the fall of 2009, Walmart announced plans to build a new superstore in Warrenton along U.S. Highway 101 near Marlin Avenue, behind Les Schwab Tire Center.

According to local media reports at the time, the 15-acre Walmart development site provided for more than 153,000 square feet of retail space and more than 600 parking spaces.

At the time, it was estimated the store would take about a year to build and offer 200 temporary jobs, then 300 permanent jobs.

It would be the first Walmart on the north Oregon coast, with the next-closest, at least on the ocean shore, in Newport.

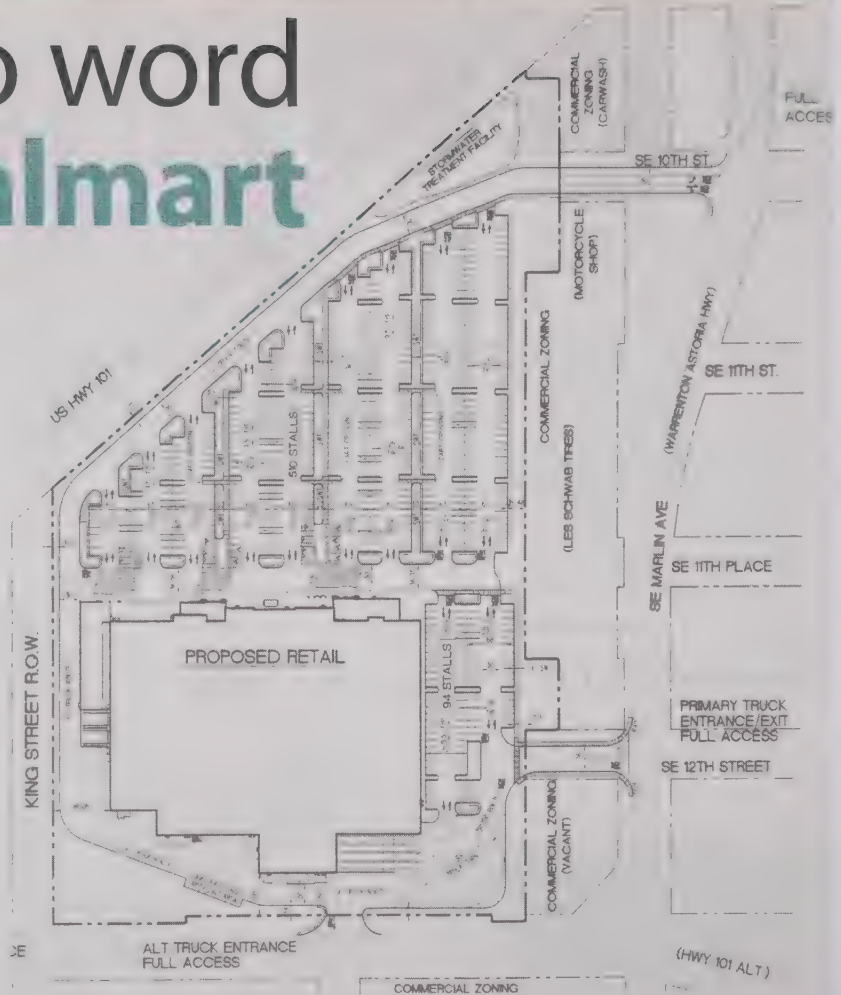
Other regional Walmarts, of which there are about 20, are clustered inland around the I-5 corridor.

Word that Walmart was planning to locate in Warrenton prompted Clatsop Economic Development Resources to

sponsor a workshop in November 2009 geared to local small-

6-2011

WALMART, page 39



This conceptual site plan by Pacland Engineering was published in the October 2009 issue of Coast River Business Journal with a story headlined, "Walmart comes to Warrenton." It depicted the location and layout of a Walmart Superstore to be constructed in Warrenton.

Walmart

continued from page 31

business owners titled, "Weathering Walmart."

It also led to formation of the grassroots group Clatsop Residents Against Walmart. "We don't want to give up, because Walmart isn't good for anyone," said Sara Meyer, a member of the organization.

"Walmart takes out of a community," added Meyer, who owns Sara's Old Photos in Astoria.

"Small, local businesses support the community and make the north coast what it is, in a lot of ways. There is no way for money to be circulated when Walmart moves in. They have their own banking system, their own advertising, their own clean-up crews."

Meyer said she recently heard that PacLand Engineering, which has offices throughout the West Coast, including Portland, had submitted a preapplication on Walmart's behalf to the City of Warrenton for construction of a 147,000-square-foot building.

However, Parker said no such application has been submitted. A representative of PacLand told Coast River Business Journal on May 25 that the company cannot discuss any of its projects and could not confirm whether a Warrenton Walmart store was one such project.

In December 2009, Walmart put

an editorial on its corporate website (the site indicated the editorial had run in an October edition of the Daily Astorian) that was posted by Kal Patel, then Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.'s regional general manager-vice president for store operations in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Alaska and Hawaii.

Patel wrote:

"In mid-September we were pleased to announce our hopes to bring a new Walmart to Warrenton that will help people save money and live better.

"The Warrenton Walmart will offer a full-service grocery department, direct access to \$4 generic prescriptions, and the more than 60 traditional departments featured in all of our stores. We believe we are presenting the North Coast with an ideal store in terms of size, orientation and merchandise and we will continue partnering hand-in-hand with city staff throughout the application process...."

"Walmart considers itself a citizen of the communities we serve. We provide good jobs for people who need either full- or part-time work or management positions and we offer many opportunities for growth and promotion. More than 10,000 Oregonians are Walmart associates, with those working hourly schedules earning an average of \$12.12 per hour. Many members of management in our company started as cashiers or clerks. The Warrenton Walmart could offer as many as 300 jobs, effectively keeping more dollars in the local area."

TO THE EDITOR:

PacLand developers had a pre-preapplication with Carol Parker, Warrenton City Planner and others in late April. The unnamed business is Walmart and the footprint for the proposed store is like what PacLand submitted when they sought to build Walmart behind Les Schwab Tire.

I am among many citizens who oppose the predatory and near monopoly (single buyer) control that Walmart Corp wields. Walmart leads the race to the bottom for employee wages, hours and health care. Walmart, big banks, corporations and Wall Street make billions while eliminating or cutting employees and wages of their workers. Walmart takes almost all the dollars spent in their stores out of each area and hoards their 2010 profits of \$15,400,000,000.00 on sales of \$419 billion. Walmart does not care about community—or volunteers. They want to be the only choice shoppers have. They will work to close down Main Street Market, Cash 'N Carry, Fred Meyer, Safeway, and the tire companies, pharmacies, and floral shops.

The North Coast does not need Walmart. A small box store wants to serve 7,000 paying customers each week in order to make a profit. Clatsop County has 37,000+ residents. A family of four spends a monthly average of \$192.30 on food. We already have seven box stores. That's more than enough to serve our wants. If Walmart comes, they will employ 2/3 of a worker for every one that is working now. We lose again.

Let your leaders know that this store is bad for us and is not wanted here. Warrenton Commissioners have a stated goal of supporting existing business and helping them succeed. They should be the source for keeping a community destructive business out.

Sara Meyer
Astoria

CP
5.20.2011



Letter to the Editor

Every dollar at Walmart harms local community

To the Editor:

Strong rumors, out of town lawyers and staff seeking wetlands vacation indicate a Walmart super store expects to build in the retail designated acres across from Costco. I have been a member of CRAW (Clatsop Residents Against Walmart) for three years because I know that the financial intent of Walmart is to eliminate local competition, and send all possible generated revenue to its corporate headquarters. That will take dollars away from local retail businesses, advertising agencies, banks and all the volunteer groups that so heavily rely on the support of locally owned businesses.

Recently I read two "thank you" ads for help in raising money for our kids and our cultural activities. Over 250 small business owners and individuals were listed. In one ad Safeway, Costco and Fred Meyer were also donors. If we lose these businesses, we lose in so many ways. Walmart will not donate enough to our organizations and good causes

we so proudly support. Statistics show that we will lose at least one-third of our local retail and related services if a Walmart comes to an area. When big box stores take over, the specialty services and products we sometimes need go away because big box stores carry stock that sells often but not the slower selling items that allow you to finish your projects.

After the last Warrenton Commission meeting I was accused of not wanting jobs in Warrenton. I take offense at that because facts show that for every lower paying job provided in a Walmart, 1 1/3 jobs are lost from other local businesses. Walmarts provide their employees information on how to obtain food stamps and other government funded programs like welfare because they don't want to pay decent wages as does COSTCO. Every dollar spent with a Walmart does harm the greater community in so many ways. For me, it is corporate greed taking away the local flow of business that enables our communities to be strong in their volunteer activities. That sense of community is what I think makes the North Coast so very wonderful.

City Commissions serve its citi-

zens. Let them know your thoughts. If Walmart does come here, you can choose to shop elsewhere.

Sara Meyer 4-20-2012
Astoria

COLUMBIA PRESS

JULY 22, 2011



Letters to the Editor

Walmart is bad for local community

TO THE EDITOR:

The charade of secrecy your city leaders share with the Walmart folks give good indication for the future snubbing the town will receive. There is no "good neighbor" or supportive community member with a Walmart.

That business is predatory; a cartel that funnels money out of our county. Bigger is not better. Permitting and allowing a Walmart to build will crush the wealth of giving and volunteer support from local businesses that make Clatsop County so

very special.

I'm told that city planners, city councils, chambers of commerce, and government agencies can't deny a business coming to the area. All those groups claim they exist because they "support economic development." Walmarts destroy jobs, reduce wages, and remove money from the towns they are in. It has been city leaders saying "no" to Walmarts that really support existing businesses and their communities. I implore our leaders to do their job, and say "No Walmart."

There were over 200 raffle gifts at the Relay for Life—all from our local businesses. The Regatta Concert; the North Coast Symphonic Band,

school sports and over 200 volunteer organizations are all supported by local businesses and people that keep the money circulating here. Without that reuse of money, communities wither. You then get places for people surviving: a few wealthy and locked behind their protected gates and many barely getting by, expecting help from a county or state that has little to give.

Walmart is bad for communities that care about their churches, social organizations, schools, and each other. I really know we make Clatsop County a unique place and a Walmart will change that.

Sara Meyer
Astoria

Supreme Court limits Wal-Mart sex bias case

THE DAILY ASTORIAN • MONDAY, JUNE 20, 2011

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court today blocked a massive sex discrimination lawsuit against Wal-Mart on behalf of female employees in a decision that makes it harder to mount large-scale bias claims against the nation's biggest companies.

The justices agreed that the lawsuit against Wal-Mart Stores Inc. could not proceed as a class action in its current form, reversing a decision by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco. By a 5-4 vote along ideological lines, the court said there were too many women in too many jobs at Wal-Mart to wrap into one lawsuit.

The lawsuit could have involved up to 1.6 million women, with Wal-Mart facing potentially billions of

dollars in damages.

Now, the handful of women who brought the case may pursue their claims on their own, with much less money at stake and less pressure on Wal-Mart to settle. Two of the named plaintiffs, Christine Kwapnoski and Betty Dukes, attended the argument. Kwapnoski is an assistant manager at a Sam's Club in Concord, Calif. Dukes is a greeter at the Walmart in Pittsburg, Calif.

In a statement, Wal-Mart said, "The court today unanimously rejected class certification and, as the majority made clear, the plaintiffs' claims were worlds away from showing a companywide discriminatory pay and promotion policy."

Dukes and Kwapnoski said they

were disappointed in the ruling, but vowed to push ahead with their claims. Both women spoke on a conference call with reporters.

"We still are determined to go forward to present our case in court. We believe we will prevail there," Dukes said.

"All I have to say is when I go back to work tomorrow, I'm going to let them know we are still fighting," Kwapnoski.

Marcia D. Greenberger, co-president of the National Women's Law Center, said "the court has told employers that they can rest easy, knowing that the bigger and more powerful they are, the less likely their employees will be able to join together to secure their rights."

The high court's majority agreed with Wal-Mart's argument that being forced to defend the treatment of female employees regardless of the jobs they hold or where they work is unfair.

Justice Antonin Scalia's opinion for the court's conservative majority said there need to be common elements tying together "literally millions of employment decisions at once."

But Scalia said that in the lawsuit against the nation's largest private employer, "That is entirely absent here."

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, writing for the court's four liberal justices, said there was more than enough uniting the claims. "Wal-Mart's delegation of discretion over pay and

promotions is a policy uniform throughout all stores," Ginsburg said.

Business interests lined up with Wal-Mart while civil rights, women's and consumer groups have sided with the women plaintiffs.

Both sides have painted the case as extremely consequential. The business community has said that a ruling for the women would lead to a flood of class-action lawsuits based on vague evidence. Supporters of the women feared that a decision in favor of Wal-Mart could remove a valuable weapon for fighting all sorts of discrimination.

Said Greenberger: "The women of Wal-Mart, together with women everywhere, will now face a far steeper road to challenge and correct pay and

other forms of discrimination in the workplace."

The lawsuit, citing what are now dated figures from 2001, said that women are grossly underrepresented among managers, holding just 14 percent of store manager positions compared with more than 80 percent of lower-ranking supervisory jobs that are paid by the hour. Wal-Mart responded that women in its retail stores made up two-thirds of all employees and two-thirds of all managers in 2001.

The company also has said its policies prohibit discrimination and that it has taken steps since the suit was filed to address problems, including posting job openings electronically.

Walmart rumors

Strong rumors, out-of-town lawyers and staff seeking wetlands vacations indicate a Walmart Super Store is expected to be built in the retail-designated acres across from Costco.

I have been a member of Clatsop Residents Against Walmart (CRAW) for three years because I know that the financial intent of Walmart is to eliminate local competition and send all locally generated revenue to its corporate headquarters. That will take dollars away from local retail businesses, advertising agencies, banks and all the volunteer groups that so heavily rely on the support of locally owned businesses.

Recently, I read two thank-you advertisements for help in raising money for our children and our cultural activities. More than 250 small business owners and individuals were listed. In one advertisement was our Safeway, Costco and Fred Meyer. If we lose those businesses, we lose in so many ways, and Walmart will not donate enough to our organizations and good causes we so proudly support.

Statistics show that we will lose at least one-third of our local retail and related services if a Walmart comes to an area. When big box stores take over, the specialty services and products we sometimes need go away because big box stores carry stock that sells often, but not the slower-selling items that allow you to finish your projects.

After the Warrenton Commission meeting, I was accused of not wanting jobs in Warrenton. I take offense at that, because facts show that for every lower-paying job provided in a Walmart, 1 1/3 jobs are lost from other local businesses. Walmarks provide their employees information on how to obtain food stamps and other government-funded programs like welfare because they don't want to pay decent wages, as does Costco.

Every dollar spent with a Walmart does harm to the greater community in so many ways. For me, it is corporate greed taking away the local flow of business that enables our communities to be strong in their volunteer activities. That sense of community is what I think makes the North Coast so very wonderful.

City commissions serve their citizens. Let them know your thoughts. If Walmart does come here, you can choose to shop elsewhere.

5-7-2012 SARA MEYER
Astoria

Open forum

Walmart bashing

There are often letters to the editor bashing Walmart and extolling the virtues of our "local" businesses.

Safeway is not a local business. According to Wikipedia, it is a Fortune 500 company and the second largest supermarket chain after the Kroger Co. It was founded in American Falls, Idaho, in 1915, and is currently headquartered in Pleasanton, Calif.

Fred Meyer is a chain of hypermarkets (food and department store combined). It was founded in Portland in 1922. Fred Meyer was acquired by the Kroger Company of Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1998. Kroger is one of the largest grocery store chains in the U.S.

Costco is the largest membership warehouse club chain in the U.S. As of July 2011, it was the sixth largest

retailer in the U.S., and the seventh largest retailer in the world. It is headquartered in Kirkland, Wash.

Rite Aid is also a Fortune 500 company headquartered in Pennsylvania.

Walgreen's is one of the largest drug retailing chains in the U.S., and is headquartered in Illinois.

These are all "big box" stores, just like Walmart. None of them are "local" businesses unless you define "local" as the place the stores were built.

All of these stores have pharmacies – now we have no independent pharmacies except Paramount Drug in Astoria.

We have one independent grocery store in Warrenton. Safeway and Fred Meyer haven't put them out of business, and I doubt that Walmart will, either.

CONNIE SAMUEL
Warrenton

O.A. 5-18-2012



2017

Vince Williams
Tom Johnson
Henry Stalensky

Henry Stalensky

Vince Williams
Tom Johnson

QuD:



A Diane Collier
1033 SE Anchor Ave
Warrenton, OR 97146-9516

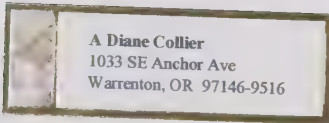
Vince Williams
Tom Johnson

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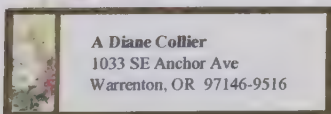
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1033 SE Anchor Ave
Warrenton, OR 97146-9516





A Diane Collier
1033 SE Anchor Ave
Warrenton, OR 97146-9516

Interviewed
by
Don Tree
KAT



A Diane Collier
1033 SE Anchor Ave
Warrenton, OR 97146-9516

Interviewed
by
Don Tree
KAT

Walmart decision delayed

Planning Commission allows more time for public comments

By **CHELSEA GORROW**
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — The Warrenton Planning Commission will make a decision to grant or deny a land use permit for Walmart Nov. 15.

Expected to be made after the public hearing Thursday evening, the decision was delayed because of a request to leave the record open for

testimony from an attorney for Clatsop Residents Against Walmart.

That record will be left open for the next seven days, then will allow seven days for rebuttals and an additional seven days for closing statements from the Walmart representatives.

That period ends Nov. 15 and the commission will meet at that time to reach a decision.

"I think that it's an important

thing that at the end of the day, this meeting is about two things that we're talking about, the design and the variances," said Paul Mitchell, chairman of the Planning Commission. To the design, he said, "I'm not comfortable with the way it looks today. So you're going to have some work to do."

During the three-hour meeting, Walmart was confirmed to be the

applicant for a 153,000-square-foot retail store on U.S. Highway 101 near Costco. Walmart is expected to bring 300 jobs to Clatsop County, with an average wage of \$13.04 per hour. It will provide groceries, a bakery, a pharmacy, home goods, apparel, sporting goods and lawn and garden care.

See **WALMART**, Page 6A

Walmart 

The Warrenton Planning Commission will make a decision on Walmart's land use permit Nov. 15. The record for public comments will be left open for the next seven days, then the city will allow seven days for rebuttals and an additional seven days for closing statements from Walmart representatives.

Warrenton Planning Commission to decide on retail application Thursday

Store proposal is rumored to be a Walmart

By **CHELSEA GORROW**
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — Warrenton's Planning Commission will meet Thursday evening to decide the fate of an application for a retail store on U.S. Highway 101 — and that store is rumored to be Walmart.

At 6:30 p.m., the public meeting will begin at the Warrenton Community Center, located at 173 S.W. Third St.

The plans up for approval were submit-

ted by PacLand, a company from Seattle that has been tied to Walmart in the past. The plans are for a 153,000-square-foot store across Ensign Lane from Costco.

The Warrenton City Commission had previously shot down a recommendation by staff to allow an outside hearings officer from Medford to oversee land use decisions for that application. The commission voted unanimously in favor of allowing the Planning Commission to move forward.

DA 10-24-2012

Walmart: Design of the building is a big issue

Continued from Page 1A

The Arkansas-based discount retail chain applied for variances that include lot line adjustments and reducing the number of bike racks required. By code the store is expected to have one bike space for every 10 parking stalls, which would mean 67 bike racks. It has asked for 28. Costco received the same variance when it was built, reducing its number from 70 to 10.

The city of Warrenton staff, led by Planning Director Skip Urling, recommended approving Walmart's application with 15 conditions.

Right away, Greg Hathaway, a lawyer representing the applicants, said Walmart agreed to those conditions, which included installation of a traffic signal on Ensign Lane, agreement to five fire hydrants and fire apparatus access allowed in the "truck route" behind the building.

But a big issue for many opponents and members of the Warrenton Planning Commission included the design of the building, which will be backed up against the highway with a large wall between the store and the road.

"It looks like a prison," commissioner Daryl Birney said of the design.

Mitchell added, "It's not appealing."

Concerns were also raised about the possibility of graffiti on the wall.

But over time, the trees that will be planted between the sidewalk and the wall will grow to conceal it, Bryan Dickerson of PacLand explained. Now that three weeks remain until a decision is made, Walmart representatives agreed to revisit the wall plans and look for a more appealing design.

More open appearance?

But still, Mitchell asked why the building couldn't be shifted to be more open to the community.

Future development behind the lot, Dickerson explained, "would not allow good flow" for shared access. It would

also mean shoppers would have to go to the back of the building to turn left and get back on the highway from the parking lot, given the road median on Ensign Lane.

Mitchell said he wanted Warrenton not to be considered a place one drives through, but drives to. Seeing a wall and the butt of a building was not a way to welcome visitors, he said.

But while designers and commissioners focused on aesthetics, such as the color palette which will be earth-tones – shades of brown and tan on the exterior and the wall – there were sighs and grumbles from the audience about the "ridiculous" conversation, that shifted to what the walls would contain once the podium was opened up for public comment.

"Much of the product line fosters a low quality of life because of the quality of the product," Warrenton resident Del Corbett said, also noting Walmart's labor practices. "They're cheap, very cheap. Come to Walmart and you can get it cheap, and you take it home, and it's broken and it ends up filling the landfill. For those reasons, and for many more, I urge denial for the application."

Mitchell stopped Corbett half way through his testimony, trying to direct the conversation back to the land use issues and concerns about the design, rather than Walmart's reputation.

But support from the audience, followed by an opinion of an attorney for the Clatsop Residents Against Walmart, allowed testimony to continue on the topic of the latter.

Mitchell did ask that the conversation remain civil.

Support urged

A representative of North Coast Retail Center LLC, Wes Giesbrecht, expressed support of the project, saying that Walmart would bring the "critical mass" that many big stores look for before settling in the community. The property adjacent to where Walmart is proposed has been looked at by 100 retailers, Giesbrecht said, but without

that big attraction, many have turned the site down. Giesbrecht was later asked what is proposed for the land behind Walmart. He said four or five companies were looking to build there, but did not name them. However, according to their website, northcoastretailcenter.com, a Marshall's store is pending on the property.

Giesbrecht was one of two who voiced support of the project.

Nadia Gardner, a Cannon Beach resident, voiced opposition to Walmart. She said the proposal does not only affect Warrenton, but has implications countywide.

"This is not 1985," Gardner said. "This is not Nebraska or Iowa. This is Oregon and here we do things differently, we fly with our own wings. ...

"Think about this as a piece of a puzzle, because we are dying of 1,000 cuts. Each one of these applications is wreaking havoc."

She encouraged smart growth, rather than big development that "sucks the life out of small communities." She also, as a scientist, said the tree choices for in front of the wall are not native to the Oregon Coast and would likely die of fungus from the wet conditions.

"I urge you that if you have to accept this application, help them make better choices," she said.

The insignificant wetlands – deemed insignificant earlier this year after a lengthy Warrenton City Commission discussion – were not insignificant but necessary, she added.

But bottom line, she discouraged approval of the application as a whole. And if Walmart has to come to Warrenton, she said, make it a smaller store.

"Our communities can negotiate harder with these guys. They have all the money in the world, and they don't give a crap about any of us, so, like in a lot of communities that fight them, they do smaller stores and we

could do that, too. Why do we have to have a Super Walmart?," she said.

Lawyer steps in

Comments continued opposed to the Walmart, including from Ken Helm, a lawyer representing Clatsop Residents Against Walmart, who said the application and discussion for approval was premature, as the applicant did not have a wetlands permit for the site in hand, which he said was a requirement of the city's code.

Helm also said, as part of the city code, loading truck docks can not be put on the same side of the building as the highway and for the variances, the applicants needed to show hardships rather than inconvenience, such as the variance for the bike racks.

But Hathaway, during the rebuttal period, said that all of the discussion about Walmart and its practices were not relevant to the land use application. Hathaway said he has argued against Helm in many other similar cases, including in The Dalles and Hood River as recently as Monday. And in those communities, Walmart has often heard the same arguments.

"I'm not going to start talking about the statements that they make about Walmart that are incorrect, because most of them are," Hathaway said. "This is not the first time I've heard all of this. Most of it's inaccurate, but people believe it. And if they believe it, that's fine. I can't stop them from believing what they believe, even though it may not be accurate or it may not be true. But what I can say is that it's not relevant."

Not all opposition was directed at Walmart, however. Some was directed at the city and the planning commission; in comment after comment, dismay was expressed by a majority of those present that the applicant for the project on Highway 101 was never named until Thursday. A Walmart store was revealed to have been in the works for more than five years but the



CHELSEA GORROW — The Daily Astorian

Doug Badger, a Walmart spokesman, looks on as an artist rendering of a proposed Walmart store is displayed for the Warrenton Planning Commission during the land use hearing.

land use permit was applied for by PacLand, a Seattle-based development company.

"I'm not anti-development, not by any means," said Warrenton business owner Krista Bingham. "But it's important to know what else is coming. And I think it's unfair we're finding out now. ... It's fair and right to let your constituents know what's coming."

She continued, "It's only fair to tell the townspeople, not five years later. It's too late, they're coming, we get it. But be honest. Be transparent."

Written comments can be submitted to the Warrenton Planning Commission until 5 p.m. Nov. 1. The address is City of Warrenton Planning Dept., P.O. Box 250, Warrenton, OR 97146.

10-26-2012

No wall for Walmart

*Cities commonly set design
requirements for big box stores*

Walmart is taking its name literally by proposing a large wall between its new store in Warrenton and U.S. Highway 101. Warrenton Planning Commission member Daryl Birney observes that the store plan looks like a prison.

It's safe to say this does not comply with company founder Sam Walton's desire to at least appear to be a good neighbor.

Contrast this with Safeway's store on Marine Drive in Astoria, which was carefully designed to augment the town's historical maritime design theme. Achieving this result was a consequence of high expectations and insistence on the part of Astoria, coupled with a very positive sense of corporate citizenship by Safeway.

Warrenton is a nice small town with a lot of well-deserved community pride. Blessed with a considerable amount of developable property on U.S. 101 and a come-hither development philosophy, in the past two decades it has become a magnet for national retail shopping outlets. It draws an enormous amount of business from both Clatsop and Pacific (Wash.) counties, in addition to serving a large number of coastal

visitors.

If there ever was a time when Warrenton needed to say yes to every half-baked corporate design scheme, that time is long past. It is perfectly within the city's right to specify what it wants to see on its portion of the treasured Oregon Coast Highway. It can and must tell Walmart that what it gets away with in Arkansas is not acceptable here.

A better focused and determined leadership might have chosen to zone a key community asset like U.S. 101 frontage with a view to long-term enhancement of historical and scenic values. It is good to see that a group of citizens understands that the compromises of today set the stage for even worse compromises in the future. If a city sets design requirements, prospective corporate tenants will respond. That is an expectation in many regions of America these days.

In contrast, a community that acts like the grateful recipient of company "favors" will get minimal respect, loyalty or compliance with design expectations. It's not too late for Warrenton to insist on the high-quality development for this prime location.



ALEX PAJUNAS — The Daily Astorian
Warrenton Planning Commissioners, from left, Daryl Birney, Henry Balensifer, Paul Mitchell, Vince Williams and Tommy Johnson discuss whether the proposed Walmart design fits in with the city Thursday at the Warrenton Community Center.

Divided planners approve Walmart

By CHELSEA GORROW
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — After an initial 3-2 vote to turn down the applications for a Walmart store in Warrenton Thursday night, one planning commissioner's switch decision made all the difference to swing the project the other way.

Now, there will be a Walmart in Warrenton after all.

"We look forward to bringing hundreds of jobs and a new, affordable shopping option to Warrenton," said Rachel Wall, senior manager of community affairs for Walmart.

"We are pleased by the Planning Commission's support for the new Walmart store, and we look forward to working closely with Warrenton officials as the planning and design process continues."

The land use applications for PacLand, a development company from Seattle working on behalf of Walmart, passed after Planning Commissioner Daryl Birney seemingly changed his mind to make the deciding vote



Rendering submitted by Douglas Badger
The wall separating U.S. Highway 101 and the proposed Walmart store has been lowered from 10 to 6 feet per the request of the Warrenton Planning Commission. The lowered wall and other additional alterations were submitted this week to the city in anticipation of Thursday's meeting, when the Warrenton Planning Commission approved the proposal.

for the application's approval.

When the motion was made to accept all three applications – site design review, property line adjustments and a variance for a reduction in bicycle stall requirements (a reduction from 68) – Commissioners Vince Williams and Tommy Johnson voted in favor.

Chairman Paul Mitchell and

Commissioners Henry Balensifer and Bimey voted in opposition.

But when the vote was broken out into three individual applications, the property line adjustment and variance passed unanimously. The final vote on the site design review passed 3-2, with Bimey, Johnson and Williams supporting it; Balen-

sifer and Mitchell remained against approval.

"Business is business and I think it should come," Williams said to Mitchell before the final vote.

The deciding factors

The decision came three weeks to the day after the last Warrenton Planning Commission meeting, when a request was granted to extend the public comment period by seven days.

That left an additional seven days for rebuttals and a further set of seven days for Walmart's closing statements.

With that, Walmart representatives and the developer PacLand of Seattle, submitted changes to the plans for a Walmart store in Warrenton, addressing some of the areas the Planning Commission took issue with in October.

At that time, Bimey said the store looked like a prison while Mitchell said it was not welcoming and didn't represent the Warrenton community the way it should.

Thursday night, with an audience of around 20 people, he still wasn't pleased.

The audience was not permitted to comment.

See **WALMART**, Page 10A



ALEX PAJUNAS — The Daily Astorian

Construction equipment sits in the undeveloped lot across Ensign Way from the Warrenton Costco Nov. 5. The lot is the site for a 153,000-square-foot Walmart.

10A

Walmart: Mitchell and Williams

THE DAILY ASTORIAN • FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2012

clash over core issues



Rendering submitted by Douglas Badger
for the store Thursday night

The proposed Walmart store in Warrenton is shown. The Warrenton Planning Commission approved the application for the store Thursday night after three additional weeks of testimony and rebuttals were accepted.

"My thought all along in the process was that this wasn't about a specific business, whether or not we want a certain business to come to town. It's about how we want that business to look," Mitchell said. "And if we were going to pass variances, we asked specifically that that business fills a specific need for us. And that is to look a certain way when it comes to our community."

"I walked away hoping that the applicant would design something and come back to us with something a little bit more in keeping with what this community should look like. It came back to the same exact design with the exception of awnings over the windows and brick or stone on the face of the building. Those are the only changes. I'm insulted by that, personally. I think that it's like very little effort was put into trying to make it look (better)."

Mitchell then shared photos of better Walgreens around the country — Miami, Washington, D.C. — that proved Walmart could do better. Williams argued those cities have more people and will bring in more money for Walmart than the smaller market of Clatsop County.

"Walmart is a multi-billion-dollar corporation," Mitchell said. "And for them to change the facade of their building isn't like you or me running a business and trying to change our businesses. I understand that what plays in Washington, D.C., or Miami is not necessarily what's going to play here. And it shouldn't."

"But they have the architectural ability, they have the wherewithal to create something that's not just your norm."

He added of the current design, "To me, it's just another tan, ugly building."

But Commissioner Williams disagreed.

"It doesn't look ugly to me," Williams said. "I think we're in a market that's a small market. You show Washington, D.C. ... You've got big markets there with hundreds of thousands of people coming through. There's more dollars there than here."

Mitchell countered, "The city's not building the store! Walmart is building the store."

"I understand that, but there is a certain amount of money as a businessman," that you put into it, Williams replied. "Art is art and it's different for anyone. This is going to be a business that looks very generic to the rest of them in the country and I don't have a problem with it personally. I don't think what you might like, I might

like. They're a business, they're a business!"

The decision to allow Walmart on the North Coast came exactly one day after a consultant hired by the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association vocalized about the seriousness of how a downtown can survive — and big-box stores were not the answer.

But for Warrenton, it may be, although one of the commissioners was torn on that direction.

"My frustration is that I don't think there is anything we can do about it," Bimey said of the application, agreeing with Mitchell. "They got us."

"No, they don't got us," Mitchell replied. "We can still say no to the variance."

Bimey said he didn't want the installation of Walmart to be like the Home Depot.

"The Planning Commission, shortly after I came on, expressed many, many times their embarrassment of the Home Depot," Bimey said. "I think we're going to be doubly embarrassed with this. I don't think it's any different. It's backed up against the highway like Home Depot is. We asked them to maybe turn it around and they said they can't."

"I don't believe in 'can't.' I believe in 'won't.'"

Changes to the plans

While Walmart declined to change the plans for the store to make it face U.S. Highway 101, developers did compromise in six areas.

The changes were submitted by Pacland, and included lowering the wall between Highway 101 and the backside of Walmart from 10 to 6 feet. The renderings showed a 4-foot wall.



Rendering submitted by Douglas Badger

The proposed Walmart store in Warrenton is shown. The Warrenton Planning Commission approved the application for the store Thursday night after three additional weeks of testimony and rebuttals were accepted.

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ALEX PAJUNAS — The Daily Astorian

Walmart will be the next store to join the cluster of national chain stores at the North Coast Retail Center in Warrenton after the decision by planners Thursday night.

The building was moved 13 feet east to put a larger buffer between the highway and the store.

The plans also showed a reduced number of parking spaces as a result of the movement of the building footprint.

An additional fire hydrant was added, while cosmetically, the building shows new awnings over the windows and brick added to the facade. Bigger trees were planted along the wall.

"I continue to conclude that the application meets various city standards," City Planner Skip Urding said. "And I am recommending approval of the site design review, the variance for the bicycle parking reduction and the lot line adjustment."

But Mitchell stood his ground.

"I see very little evidence of any effort to move forward," Mitchell argued. "And people may say, 'Oh, you have other stores in town that look a certain way,' but I didn't sit here

then. I didn't have a vote then. But I do sit here now and I will tell you that I have a hard time approving something when later down the road we're just going to have box stores that make us look like any other town.

"I've said it once and I will say it again — we're not just any other town. We're not a place you go through, we're a place you come to. And I will not support, I can't support a building that's going to just ..." He trailed off.

"I don't know how the rest of you feel, but I strongly encourage the applicant to do something about this building."

Williams made the motion both times to pass the Walmart applications — both the trio and then the site design review individually.

Johnson seconded each of

'I don't know how the rest of you feel, but I strongly encourage the applicant to do something about this building.'

— Paul Mitchell
Warrenton Planning
Commission chairman

those motions, with Birney voting in favor on the individual vote.

Future of the Walmart

There is no timeline set on when construction will begin and end for the Walmart store.

A number of permits are still pending, including one for the wetlands from the state Department of Environmental Quality and a permit by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Walmart representatives estimated 300 new jobs will be brought to the coast with the 153,000-square-foot store that will carry groceries, a pharmacy and general merchandise at "everyday low prices."

The store will also sell apparel, home goods, electronics, lawn and garden care and sporting goods.

The average wage is said to be \$13.04 per hour. In Oregon, there are more than 10,000 Walmart employees.

The burbs

In response to "Warrenton Walmart decision delayed" (*The Daily Astorian*, Oct. 26): I can remember 35 years, or so, ago when I was a kid, my dad said, "You know, one day Astoria will be the suburb of Warrenton."

BRIAN VAN GUNDY
Astoria

Walmart jobs

What I would like to know is how many of those who are complaining about Walmart are retired or have a job? Three hundred jobs? Come on. There are so many who are unemployed in this area.

Thirteen dollars an hour: Hey, for many families that is more than what they can find in this area. Safeway and Fred Meyer have really been the only options, and it is time for them to step it up and have some competition.

If you don't like Walmart, then don't shop there. Simple. I personally would love to have that option.

KAREN LEMPEA
Warrenton

Optioning for ugly

For sure, from U.S. Highway 101, Home Depot and Costco look just like what they are: giant superstores instantly identifiable by color, shape and billboard-sized lettering. That's what the owners of giant superstores want.

To their disgrace, Warrenton's commissioners have never required any developer to provide anything less ugly. One hopes they do now, in exchange for approving yet another big box development

that will wipe out the remaining small businesses in Warrenton.

Good examples of relatively attractive commercial design abound - Safeway's Astoria store is an example. Walmart will provide something other than their generic "box," but only if they are forced to by a Warrenton Commission that demands design approval.

When Walmart does so, perhaps Fred Meyer will enlarge and improve its ugly mess of a store.

DENNIS BERRY
Astoria

The Great Wall

The Warrenton Planning Commission met last Thursday evening to rule on the fate of a proposed retail store on U.S. Highway 101. At that meeting, which my wife and I attended, the rumors we've heard for years were confirmed. Walmart is, indeed, preparing to invade Clatsop County. And it seems that the city of Warrenton is rolling out the red carpet for them.

After a number of comments were heard, mostly in opposition to the proposal, Greg Hathaway, a lawyer representing the applicants, made a case for siting a superstore here as an "anchor" to create "critical mass" and attract other businesses to the area.

If what we've seen so far is any indication of what's to come, we can expect more boxes, both big and small; and there's no reason to believe that they will all be locally owned or that they won't further threaten the established restaurants and retailers who are already here,

many of whom are family-owned and have staked their life's savings on the success of their businesses.

I have experienced firsthand the example of Ellsworth, Maine, where the opening of a Walmart there led to the closing of five locally owned hardware stores within its first few years of operation.

Let's ask ourselves what kind of economic future we want for our county: one dominated by huge out-of-state corporate interests who can afford to undercut our local businesses, or a diversified economy comprised of owner-operators who live in the community and are committed to its long-term survival.

What happens behind "The Wall" should stay behind "The Wall."

JAY SPEAKMAN
Gearhart

Shame on naysayers

Shame on the people who don't want a Walmart ("Warrenton Walmart decision delayed," *The Daily*

Astorian, Oct. 26). They must be happy about the high unemployment that Clatsop County has. If you don't like it, perhaps you should move away, because it's coming whether you like it or not.

JOYCE L. OLSON
Longview, Wash.

DA
11-2-2012

Voting in Warrenton

I will vote for Tom Dyer, Henry Balensifer and Mark Kujala for

Warrenton City Commission for this reason: I have personally known all three of these men for all of their lives. I know that they are honest and will always do their best to represent this city.

I believe that they will add ideas and will listen to our concerns. I will not agree with them on every issue that comes along, and they will stand their ground with respect when it is necessary.

Please don't be deceived by Measure 81 to stop gillnetting on the Columbia River. This does nothing for salmon recovery - Measure 81 means more fish for the sport fishermen, and none for anyone else. The salmon that gillnetters get are available in the market. Wild fish are turned loose, and I am sure that we sports fishermen kill more wild fish than gillnetters.

The tax paid by gillnetting does a lot to support fish hatcheries and if Measure 81 passes, our taxes will go up. The Youngs Bay netpen fisheries supply a lot of the sport fish catch in the early fall, and the Youngs Bay fish is a Rogue River salmon, a very good eating fish, and could be lost for commercial and sport fishing.

Vote no on Measure 81.
GEORGE BERGERSON
11-2-2012 DA Warrenton

Extracting wealth

Walmart, which extracts wealth from communities, has finally showed its hand in sneaking into our county. Like liquefied natural gas corporations, Walmart knows that people are starting to catch onto its business practices, and will be protesting, so it has learned to appeal directly to local leaders without any transparency for the public.

Now we're being told that the record will be held open for our input until Nov. 1, with a decision on the application to be made Nov. 15.

Walmart has a history of bribing officials (in Mexico), discriminating against women (class action suit), selling unlabeled genetically

modified organisms (GMO) food (sweet corn is one), and paying some employees so little that they qualify for food stamps, which amounts to a government subsidy.

The "average" wage they are touting of \$13.04 is misleading. Colby Harris of Lancaster, Texas, earns \$8.90 an hour after three years there ("Wal-Mart Labor Protests Grow, Organizers Say," *The New York Times*, Oct. 9). Walmart will not be a good neighbor.

Ironically, a representative of North Coast Retail Center LLC urged citizens to support Walmart for one of the very reasons so many of us oppose it – because it will bring the "critical mass" that will attract other big (corporate) stores.

It would be in our coun-

ty's best interests to keep our resources right here, recirculating and growing our community. Besides, the wealth of the six Walmart heirs is now equal to the total of the bottom 41.5 percent of Americans ("Walmart heirs worth as much as bottom 41.5 percent of American families," *Los Angeles Times*, July 18). Enough already.

I urge denial for Walmart's application to build this behemoth. When people shop at Walmart, they are helping its CEO buy another vacation home. When people shop at local "mom and pop" stores, they are helping to pay mortgages, put food on the table, and send kids to college.

NANCY SPAAN

Astoria

11-2-2012

It's finally official: Walmart wants to build in Warrenton

Planning Commission to make application decision on November 15

Story and photos by Bruce Dustin

The long-running rumors are true—Walmart is coming to Warrenton. Most likely.

PacLand, a development company based in Seattle, presented its client's case to the Warrenton Planning Commission October 25 at the Warrenton Community Center. But even with a full arsenal to establish the validity of the entrance of a Walmart into Warrenton, the final decision was delayed until November 15.

PacLand had civil engineers, attorneys, project managers, and even consulting wetlands ecologists at their disposal to plead their case.

The slightly contentious local crowd was admonished to "keep it civil" on several occasions by the commission chair, Paul Mitchell, as they voiced their opposition to the large retail center, a super store of more than 150,000 square feet.

At issue, though, as Mitchell frequently pointed out, was merely a site design review, variances, and lot line adjustments to the proposed site next to the existing Costco and adjacent to Highway 101.

Mentioned by not only community members, but discussed at length by the commission, was the screening wall that would face Highway 101 and "soften" the view of the main structure from the highway. Vegetation (trees) would take seven to ten years to mature and it was felt by many that there was a distinct lack of attractiveness to the proposed structure. A comparison to a prison facility was made by several people present at the meeting.

Mitchell said, "I, personally, would like to see a better design to the building." He wants people to walk away from this community and tell others how attractive they found the Walmart structure.

The commission decided to keep the record open for public comment until 5 p.m., Nov. 1, after receiving a request from an attorney for Clatsop Residents Against Walmart. The city will allow seven days for rebuttals and then an additional seven days for closing statements from Walmart representatives.

The planning commission will make a decision on the land use permit at their Nov. 15 meeting.

The proposed Walmart building will be located on the large lot adjacent and south of the Costco building on S.E. Ensign Lane.

The retailer is expected to hire 300 workers with an average wage of \$13.04 per hour.

The 153,000 square foot super store will have a grocery section, along with a pharmacy, bakery, sporting goods, lawn and garden items, apparel and home goods.



PacLand Attorney Greg Hathaway addresses the Warrenton Planning Commission on Oct. 25 regarding Walmart.



VIEW FROM PARKING LOT
LOOKING SOUTHWEST

Fixed income

I can't wait for Walmart to come to Warrenton. I am really tired of having to drive 80 to 100-plus miles to shop at Walmart. As a senior citizen living on a fixed income, I save money shopping at Walmart.

If you don't like Walmart, then don't shop there. If you don't think the trees will live, then plant Leland cypress, they grow beautifully at the beach.

DA VIRGINIA L. EGGLESTON
11.9.2012 Ocean Park, Wash.

Walmart kills business

Although I no longer live in Clatsop County, I grew up in Cannon Beach and lived and worked in Astoria for several years, including working as a reporter for *The Daily Astorian* during the mid-1960s.

Please, no, not a Walmart. They are the death of small local businesses when they locate nearby, much more than any other big-box store. They are among the primary reasons so many products are made outside the U.S. at slave, or near-slave wages.

If Warrenton approves the Walmart permit it will mean the city leaders don't support small family owned local business. If Warrenton approves the permit, show them you do support local business by not shopping at Walmart. There is a lot at stake in this proposal. Think very carefully about the consequences.

DA MICHAEL SROUFE
11.9.2012 Welches

Town needs Walmart

We moved to Warrenton in 2001 because my husband was in the U.S. Coast Guard and was transferred here. I was shocked and very disappointed after moving here, realizing the closest Walmart was an hour and a half away.

Now that my husband is retired from the Coast Guard after serving 30 years, we are still here in Warrenton and still without a Walmart.

I grew up in New Jersey where we had about five Walmarts, all within a mile from each other. The people against Walmart tried to stop them from coming in, but the pros always outweighed the cons, and the Walmart stores always came in.

The town I grew up in was small, slightly bigger than Warrenton but still a small town. Once the Walmarts came into the area, no stores closed or were hurting because of a Walmart.

Fred Meyer and Safeway stores

are too high-priced for middle class residents. If the city approves a Walmart, they will give us another option to shop a store with competitive pricing.

With a Walmart in the area, Fred Meyer and Safeway can still lower their prices some and still make a profit without hurting the business. I for one – and I bet a lot of others – will still shop at Fred Meyer, Safeway, Costco along with other smaller stores.

Having a Walmart in this town doesn't mean I won't shop at these local stores. I would shop where the better deal would be.

Let's not forget the 300-plus jobs that this community really needs. Warrenton is growing and that means more money for the city.

I hope the city votes yes Thursday for a Walmart in Warrenton. A Walmart is what this town needs.

DA BERNICE LAWRENCE
11.9.2012 Warrenton

We don't want it

This is unbelievable. They are talking about Walmart here ("Warrenton Walmart decision delayed," *The Daily Astorian*, Oct. 26). Who cares what it looks like? We don't want it. Walmarts across the country have ruined the communities they've been built in, and destroyed their economies.

Will no one stand up to this? This is outrageous. There really should be more public input on this. We don't want Walmart in our community. They treat their employees like dirt and their political stances are appalling.

DA MEG PATTERSON
11.9.2012 Astoria

Planning commission approves Walmart land-use application

3-2 vote paves way for new store

By a vote of 3-2, the Warrenton Planning Commission approved a land-use application for a new Walmart off of Highway 101 near Costco.

Commissioners Vince Williams, Tommy Johnson and Daryl Birney voted in favor while Paul Mitchell and Henry Balensifer voted against the application from PacLand, a Seattle development company working for Walmart.

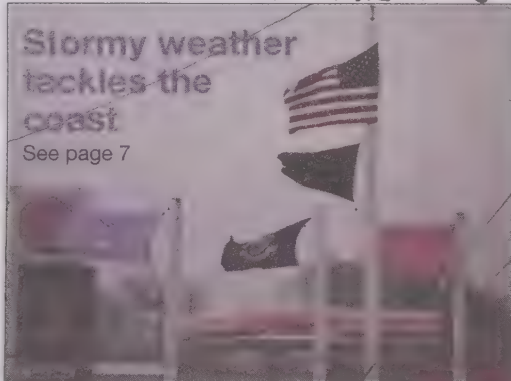
The first motion to accept all three applications (site design review, property line adjustments, and a bicycle stall requirement variance) was only supported by Williams and Johnson. In subsequent votes, the property line adjustment and bicycle variance were approved unanimously. The final vote for the site design review was then approved 3-2.

The decision came three weeks after the initial hearing on the issue. At that meeting, the planning commission had concerns with the site design, specifically with a proposed 10-foot high wall blocking the store from Highway 101. The commission requested lowering the wall to six feet and moving the building 13 feet to the east to create a larger buffer between the store and Highway 101.

Other changes submitted by PacLand included reducing the number of parking spaces, new awnings over windows, an additional fire hydrant, and brick added to the outside facade of the building. Larger trees will also be planted along the exterior wall facing the highway.

There was no indication when construction would begin on the 153,000 square foot super store. The company still needs to secure state and federal permits

C.P. 11.23.2012



Open forum

Cookie cutter design

Hmmm. I wonder, in light of the Sunday-Monday wind and rain storm, just how awnings on the soon-to-be, blah-looking Walmart building in Warrenton are going to survive? From what I understand, the front of

the building will be facing south.

Awnings? Just how would they survive our coastal wind? What were the designers and some of the commissioners thinking?

I thank Warrenton Planning Commissioners Paul Mitchell and

Henry Balensifer for their vote of no to this project. I truly appreciate Mitchell's stance against this cookie-cutter building design. Warrenton and Clatsop County deserve better.

DA KATHI MERRITT
11.23.2012 Warrenton

Pressure Walmart

There is much talk in this area about Walmart and a probable new store, and of a new public school complex in Seaside that would be above the tsunami zone. I am in favor of both and I have a couple of comments.

If Walmart were to pay their employees \$12 per hour, the cost to Walmart consumers per year would be only \$12.50 per consumer. On that basis, let us pressure Walmart to pay \$12 minimum wage to their employees.

Now, about the new school complex and the prospective Walmart in Warrenton, let us bring as much pressure as we can to ensure that as many local workers as possible be used to build the two area complexes.

No question about it, the area needs the jobs, and it is repulsive for construction companies from out of the area to be brought in, and then bring in their workers from no telling where. The jobs and the income are sorely needed here in Clatsop County.

10.25.2013

ED GARRITY
Seaside

HEAR ALL ABOUT IT!

LISTEN TO COAST COMMUNITY RADIO 91.9 FM KMRU

9:30 A.M. EACH FRIDAY

ON COMMUNITY STREET INTERVIEWING NEIGHBOURS

THIS WEEK:

Walmart under the microscope

Daily Astorian reporter Chelsea Gorrow talks with members of the Warrenton Planning Commission, including Chairman Paul Mitchell, about the recent split vote to approve the Walmart store in Warrenton.



PAUL MITCHELL



IF YOU ARE THE SHOW, PLEASE AFTER DEADLINE AT WWW.DAILYASTORIAN.COM

THE AFTER DEADLINE SHOW IS AIRED AGAIN ON SISTER STATION KCPB RADIO 90.9 FM 8:30 P.M. FRIDAYS

DA 11-29-2012

Building codes work

I have been following the building design process for the new Walmart in Warrenton and have to take issue with Paul Mitchell, the Warrenton Planning Commission chairman, and *The Daily Astorian* editorial, "Paul Mitchell nailed reality" (Nov. 20).

Building codes exist for a reason. Companies that want to invest in a community need transparency and certainty in order to plan their design and construction. If every new design needed to satisfy the personal preferences of a planning commissioner, why even have a building code in the first place? I've seen Walmart's proposed design, and it's certainly nicer than any other buildings around it.

Reporting on the Warrenton process for Walmart makes clear that the company made both substantive and

aesthetic changes to the building design in order to satisfy issues raised in the initial planning commission meeting. These include creating a larger buffer between the store and U.S. Highway 101, reducing the size of a screening wall along U.S. Highway 101 and making aesthetic improvements to the store's facade. These were all done in good faith and in keeping with the planning commission comments. Yet, Mitchell was "insulted" by these changes.

I don't doubt Paul Mitchell is sincere in his opinion. But impugning the good-faith efforts of investors who are meeting the demands of building codes, while also trying to take into account personal preferences of planning commissioners, is unfair.

BOB BRIDGENS

DA-11-30-2012 Warrenton

A price too high

I can't afford to shop at Walmart. The prices there are too high. For me, anyway.

If I were to buy food, I would be contributing to profits-at-all-costs factory farming, which produces both poor quality food, epidemic obesity and numerous health problems in the U.S. This price is too high.

If I were to buy Faded Glory or other clothing, I'd be contributing to the deaths by fire of more than 100 Bangladeshi workers in one of Walmart's factories and risking the lives of other such workers for Walmart in other factories. Faded glory, indeed.

If I were to purchase anything, I'd be supporting the new requirement that U.S. citizens be forced to show a voter ID card before they can exercise their constitutionally guaranteed right to vote.

If I were to increase the Waltons' ruthless fortunes with my hard-earned money, I would undercut the right of people like myself to earn a living wage or be represented by a union.

In one way, I cannot avoid supporting the Waltons' obscene wealth. I already pay extra state of Oregon taxes to cover the myriad state aid programs for which Walmart's "paid" employees qualify, due to their extremely low wages and minimal paid hours – despite the many hours they're told to work after they've "clocked out" for the day.

I simply don't have enough money to give any of it to "needy" billionaires who value their money above the

lives of my fellow human beings. That price is too high for my budget, my conscience and my pride.

I will make do, or do without, before I will stoop to entering a Walmart.

CHRISTOPHER PADDON

DA 11-30-2012 Astoria

11-30-2012

POINT of view

**'How do you feel
about Walmart
possibly coming to
Warrenton?'**

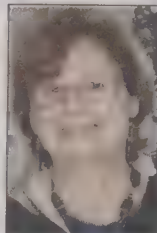


"I don't care whether they come or not. I think the area could handle a Walmart, though. It brings in business and it brings in jobs."

Joan Anderson
Astoria

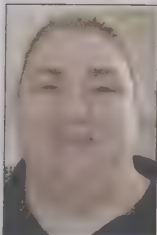
"I'm totally against it. We have Fred Meyer and Costco and all kinds of other businesses that fill that need, and Walmart is known for putting surrounding businesses out of business. We have a nice downtown, and I like supporting local business."

Anne Carpenter
Astoria



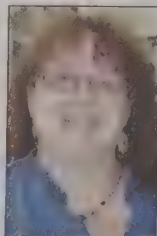
"I actually like the idea. There's not enough competition for Freddie's and Safeway to get good deals."

Karla White
Astoria



"No! I'd rather buy local."

Sherry Yost
Spokane, Wash.



"I hope so. I want Fred Meyer to have some competition, and that way I won't have to drive for an hour."

Jackie Wilkinson
Youngs River

11.14.2012

Dollar signs

Who stands to come out on top when Walmart lands in Warrenton? Besides the filthy rich Waltons themselves, Vince Williams seems to see an upside to even more people driving by his dealership, thinking a few more buyers might check out his car lot within shouting distance of the new store.

Definitely the lawyers attached to the case, paid handsomely, I'm sure, to throw their word nets of legalese out to catch and confuse the few poor souls who get to vote on each separate piece of the proposal. And then there are the local attorneys who get to rub shoulders with the guys hired by the richest family in America.

Being that close to the boys who are paid to pave the way for the heirs of the \$120 billion family fortune to continue to peddle their cheap merchandise and undersell any local competitor in yet another small market economy, one can almost see the cartoon dollar signs lighting up their eyes as they fall all over themselves to convince the commissions they represent to cast their votes in favor of all the pertinent paperwork.

Makes you wonder who pays for their input, doesn't it?

DA R. BLAINE VERLEY
11.30.2012 Astoria

Walmart appeal goes to LUBA

Warrenton finalizes decision, backs Planning Commission

By CHELSEA GORROW
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — The Warrenton City Commission voted Tuesday to send the appeal against Walmart directly to the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals.

The decision was made with a 3-0 vote, with Mayor Dick Hellberg and Commissioner Terry Ferguson absent. Hellberg is recovering from surgery; Ferguson is recovering from a work-related accident. Commissioners Mark Kujala, Mark Baldwin and Frank Orrell voted in favor of upholding the Planning Commission's decision, as recommended by city staff.

"We're recommending that since the Planning Commission has a pretty good record, that you put a lot of confidence in them to make that decision, that you'll recognize that as being the final decision of the city and allow the appeal to go directly to LUBA," City Planner Skip Urling said.

Baldwin made the motion; Orrell seconded it.

12.12.2012 See WARRENTON, Page 2

bike space in the front of the store per 10 parking spots for a new development. That would require Walmart to have 67 bike spaces. The company has applied for a variance to have 28.

Now, CRAW members will have to file with LUBA to have their appeal heard.

Meanwhile, the Warrenton City Commission adopted system development charges earlier this year. For builders, both residential and commercial, the city of Warrenton now charges a fee to support improvements and expansion because of growing demand on the water system, stormwater system, wastewater system, transportation and parks.

Tuesday, the commission held a second reading and adoption of an ordinance to firm those charges up in conjunction with the ordinance related to system development charges the city already had on the books from 1989. The ordinance adopted Tuesday repealed a section of the 1989 policy to allow the new policy, adopted in May, to not be in conflict.

The development charges were established after an audit report given to the commission suggested the city's sewer system was not supporting itself. At the time, city staff estimated the average single-family home builder would be required to pay around \$2,000. The Taco Bell restaurant, which had not yet been built, was estimated to be charged \$100,000. There is no word yet on how much money Walmart will be charged by the city of Warrenton.

Warrenton: Wetlands issue is part of appeal

Continued from Page 1

"What we heard last week, it was indicated that both parties could appeal to LUBA regardless of how we would rule," Orrell said. "I think we just need to move the process along. I don't personally see anything in here that would refrain me from voting the same way as the Planning Commission."

No public testimony was accepted.

Walmart's site design, vari-

ance on bicycle stalls and lot line adjustment applications were approved by the Warrenton Planning Commission Nov. 15. A local group called Clatsop Residents Against Walmart (CRAW) filed the appeal Nov. 30, stating four issues with Walmart's application. Those four issues included the location of the truck docks, a screening wall that CRAW alleges is not in compliance with the city's code, a lack of demonstration of hardship over the variance to

allow fewer bike racks and the lack of a wetlands permit.

Walmart will be building on one-third of an acre of former "significant" wetlands, deemed "nonsignificant" wetlands by the City Commission in April. CRAW has said a permit to build on the wetlands needs to be in-hand before Walmart, or the developer PacLand that submitted the application in the past, can apply and be granted land use permits.

The city code requires one

12.12.12

Coast River

BUSINESS JOURNAL



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Volume 7, Issue 12

Blossoming

among big boxes



Clatsop County getting ready for a Walmart

by Felicia Struve
Coast River Business Journal

Love it or hate it, Walmart fully intends to come to the north Oregon coast.

The Warrenton Planning Commission has approved final designs for a Walmart Supercenter to be located in the fast-growing shopping complex along U.S. Highway 101.

Big-box general merchandise stores such as Walmart and Target, and "category killers" such as Home Depot and Toys 'R Us, usually spur strong opposition from local merchants.

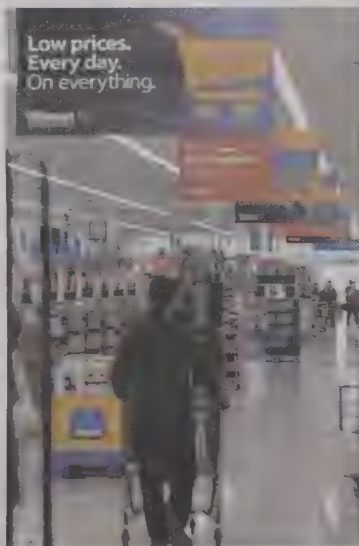
Yet some local businesses believe they can do OK — even thrive — in the shadow of the retail giants.

"You can fight it as a community, or just say it's going to happen and make lemons into lemonade," said Bruce Weber, director of the rural studies program at Oregon State University. "This story is pretty mixed."

Walmart's impact on individual businesses depends on a host of variables, including the merchandise sold, the store's customer service and its efficiency.

Bruce Sorte, a community economist with the OSU Extension Service, said, "The good news is, once you get a marketer good enough to get Costco to expand and get Walmart in ... they're thinking your economy is stout."

Economist Kenneth Stone has been evaluating Walmart's impact on small towns in Iowa since 1988. He published his most recent paper on the subject Nov. 5 in "Economic De-



Walmart barrages customers with its competitive advantages — real and perceived: "Low prices. Every day. On everything."; "Find a lower advertised price? We'll match it."; and "Unbeatable." Researcher Ken Stone says local merchants can survive, maybe even thrive, in the giants' shadow by strengthening their businesses. Photo courtesy of Walmart.

velopment Quarterly" with Georgeanne Artz.

Sorte invited Stone to Corvallis to speak to the local business community about Walmart. "His message was, the very last thing you

More Walmart:

- Astoria: becoming the anti-mall? Page 11
- Is the Astoria area a "big-box haven"? Page 16
- Tips for competing with the retailing giants Page 17
- Hospital looks to grow into Warrenton Page 28
- Serendipity owner to open second restaurant Page 29

want is to be a neighbor of a big-box store," Sorte said.

Stone's research has focused primarily on the economic impact of Walmart on the retail economy by location and by category of merchandise. He has found that Walmart does not generate an overall increase in retail sales. It simply causes a redistribution of sales, which diminishes over time for most categories.

Sorte said he has seen the Walmart effect in action in Corvallis. "Corvallis really fought Walmart and any big-box retailer," said Sorte, so the company went to Albany instead. "Immediately, we lost three of our five home improvement sorts of lumberyards."

The two stores that remained in Corvallis have a loyal customer following and great customer service, said Sorte.

Stone's research has shown that Walmart negatively impacts the revenues of stores in the same town that sell general merchandise, building materials, groceries and home fur-

WALMART, page 4

WALMART

continued from page 1

nishings. And it slows the existing decline in sales for clothing stores – while increasing sales for restaurants and specialty stores.

For neighboring communities without a Walmart, Stone's most recent study shows that sales dropped by an average of 25 percent.

The Walmart stores in Stone's study were older, smaller-format facilities unlike the Supercenter proposed for Warrenton. So while the magnitude of Walmart's impact here is likely to be different from what the study described, the direction probably would be similar.

According to members of Walmart's design team, the Supercenter would have a grocery, pharmacy, garden center, general merchandise and a tenant restaurant.

Including the garden center, the store would span more than 160,000 square feet, making it the largest store in Clatsop County. That's until Fred Meyers completes its planned 40,000-square-foot expansion in 2013.

"I'm a little disappointed that it took this long to declare that it's a Walmart" store considering locating in Warrenton, Krista Bingham told that city's Planning Commission in October. "It's fair and it's right to let your local businesses know what's coming."

Symbiotic relationships

Bingham owns Serendipity Caffe in downtown Warrenton.

She plans to open a second restaurant,

across the highway from the proposed Walmart, hoping to capture business from shoppers it would draw from Tillamook and Pacific (Washington) counties.

Rumors have been circling the North Coast Retail Center for months about a possible Olive Garden, Applebees or Red Robin restaurant. Bingham said she fully expects a national restaurant to come into the area within the next few years, and hopes to get a head start.

She spoke to the Warrenton Planning Commission in October because she was concerned the restaurant to be located with Walmart might directly compete with her business. "I really did want to see what else would come. I didn't want to put everything I own into it to compete with big business," Bingham said.

Competing with a national chain is more difficult than just providing better food, service and value, she said. "If there's no cars in the parking lot at Applebee's, [customers] just think they're the first ones there."

But if the lot is empty at a local restaurant, travelers often assume that the locals don't like it.

Meantime, a member of the Walmart design team told the Planning Commission that Walmart's restaurant tenant would be more akin to a McDonald's or Subway, not Red Robin.

Columbia Memorial Hospital also hopes to draw some business from the increase in traffic at the growing retail hub in Warrenton with a new clinic next to Bingham's restaurant.

"It's a great location," said hospital CEO Erik Thorsen. "It's convenient and it's where the growth in Warrenton is happening... People can go to see their physician and then go shopping."

Walmart watch

Walmart's iconic size makes it a considerable force in the business world. It has ranked No. 1 in Fortune magazine's "Global 500" companies for five of the past eight years.

According to Fortune, Walmart employs 2.2 million people. It boasted an operating income of \$25 billion in FY 2011.

The company has been faulted for accelerating the movement of American manufacturing jobs overseas because of the relentless pressure it puts on its suppliers as a way to give customers lower prices.

And it has faced a variety of legal hurdles in recent years, including a lawsuit that made its way to the U.S. Supreme Court over alleged gender discrimination, as well as a congressional investigation of bribery in Mexico.

In a press release regarding the Warrenton store, Walmart said it plans to employ 300 part- and full-time workers.

"Communities around the country, including Clatsop County, continue to struggle with high unemployment rates. Walmart is pleased to bring about 300 new, good jobs to the Warrenton community," said Matti Havener, the company's Washington/Oregon regional general manager.

According to the Oregon Employment Department, September's unemployment rate in Clatsop County was 7.7 percent, down from 8.5 percent in September 2011. That's on par with the national average of 7.8 percent.

A 2005 study by Emek Basker of the University of Missouri found that a new Walmart store would increase retail employment by 100 jobs in the first year. "Half of this gain disappears over the next five years as other retail establishments exit and contract, leaving a long-run statistically significant net gain of 50 jobs," Basker wrote.

At the same time, "Wholesale employment declines by approximately 20 jobs due to Wal-Mart's vertical integration."

As for its impact on local compensation, Walmart has also been accused of causing a net reduction in retail wages, said OSU's Weber. "The studies have been pretty consistent that in larger cities, there is a negative impact on wages," he said. "That isn't so true in smaller places, because the wages [at Walmart] aren't that much lower."

According to its press release, Walmart expects to pay full-time hourly employees \$13.04 an hour.

Average retail wages in Clatsop, Columbia and Tillamook counties range from \$11.64 an hour for cashiers, to \$18 an hour for supervisors and \$36.43 for sales managers, according to the state Employment Department.

"If you have retailers paying \$18 an hour, you're probably going to have lower wages after Walmart comes in," Weber said.

Competing with Walmart

"The reality is that when a Walmart comes into a community, there will be an economic impact," said Kevin Leahy, executive director of Clatsop Economic Development Resources (CEDR) and the Clatsop Small Business Development Center.

A new Walmart in Warrenton will have an impact on businesses in Clatsop County, and perhaps some in Tillamook and Pacific counties, as well.

"We need to be on the offensive here,"

said Leahy. "Our [organization's] mission is to prepare businesses. Let's work together as a community to address how we can compete."

Added Leahy, "You can never compete with Walmart on price. You'll go out of business."

He said local businesses have more flexibility than national retailers to respond to the needs and desires of local customers.

Leahy said he thinks "big guys" like Safeway, Fred Meyer and Costco will probably will see a greater impact from Walmart's arrival than the smaller, downtown merchants.

To that end, the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association's business development committee has been working since May to hire urban planner Michele Reeves to help Astoria develop a downtown revitalization plan.

And CEDR plans to host an event sometime soon for local businesses to talk about how they can position their companies to compete with big-box stores.

What now?

Simply put, mathematics is at the heart of Walmart's success. "What Walmart has taught us is you need to know profits by hours," Sortie said. "Numbers matter."

Sorte, Stone and Weber all suggest that local businesses facing competition from Walmart must become very familiar with their competitor, identify its weaknesses and then adjust their businesses to fill those gaps.

"Small businesses need to take a positive approach," Sorte said. "The first thing you want to do is look at your employee practices."

For instance, consider developing professional growth paths for employees, empower employees to be able to negotiate and make decisions, become more flexible with employees' schedules, and look at how competitive your benefits are with Walmart's.

"It's not intuitive that your employees are most important," Sorte said. "They're the ones who keep and get you new customers... You secure those employees the best you can."

Next, consider developing a specific business niche. "In many ways, it's better to find areas where Walmart can't compete with you," Sorte said.

For example, you could be the nursery for rose enthusiasts. Or employ those workers who are most knowledgeable about nutritional supplements.

"People do have loyalties, so those businesses that are considered well-connected and committed to the community are rewarded," Sorte said.

Of course, businesses also must focus on improving their operational efficiency. That may require investing in software to help track inventory so you can systematically discount and move old merchandise. Or implementing a loyalty program to track customer preferences. Or updating your point-of-sale technology to shorten wait times at the register.

Basker says, "Walmart owes its success primarily to its early and persistent investments in technology. Technology has allowed Walmart not only to grow – adding stores in new markets and adding a broad range of products over the past half century – but also to cut its costs, making it a formidable competitor in almost every retail sector."

"Walmart's competitive effect lowers prices in local markets, in the process driving some of its competitors to contract or shut down."

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Standards too late for Walmart

**Warrenton commission
wrestles with site design**

By **CHELSEA GORROW**
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — Remember when the city of Warrenton proposed adopting a western theme back in 2010?

Although that design plan never quite caught on, commercial architectural and site design standards are being considered again at the city — this time without a theme and with codes that would prevent a business from building with its back against U.S. Highway 101.

It's too late for these standards to be applied to a new Walmart store proposed late last year near Costco. They also won't do much to correct the design of Home Depot, which seemed to be sore spot for many on the commission.

But with several developers and landowners, including Wes Giesbrecht of the

See **WARRENTON**, Page 10

F.P. 2A, 4.11.2013

State sides with Walmart opponents

LUBA remands Warrenton's application approval

By **CHELSEA GORROW**
The Daily Astorian

Walmart is not coming to Warrenton.

At least not anytime soon, after the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals sided with Clatsop Residents Against Walmart (CRAW) at the appeal against the store's 17-acre construction on U.S. Highway 101 near Costco.

The Warrenton Planning Commission approved the applications for site design, property line adjustments and variances back in November. The application included intent to build on a wetland and the variance dealt with fewer bicycle racks than required by city code.

But LUBA has remanded those applications, issuing the final opinion last week, which sends Walmart and

its developers back to the planning commission.

"We are in the process of reviewing the decision by the Land Use Board of Appeals," said Rachel Wall, senior manager of community affairs for Walmart.

Astoria resident Sara Meyer, a member of CRAW, shared the group's success.

"It is our belief that Walmart is

attempting to use their huge size to impose what they want rather than abide by the established codes of Warrenton," she said.

A lower number of bike racks — 28 instead of 68, as code required one per 10 parking spaces — could not be granted on condition of a hardship because there was no hardship given, the LUBA opinion read. The LUBA opinion also states that the wetlands permit by the state needs to be authorized before the application is submitted.

On the first assignment of error, the wetlands issue, LUBA ruled, "we agree with petitioners that the planning director misconstrued" the city code.

"The site design review application did not include a valid state wetland removal-fill authorization," the opinion reads. "Instead, planning staff recommended that the planning commission impose a condition requiring that the required state wetland fill/removal permit be submitted when

See **WALMART**, Page 3

Walmart: Error in loading docks site

Continued from Page 1

(the Walmart developer) files a building permit application to construct the store approved in the site plan review. (CRAW) objected to this proposed condition, arguing the (city code) requires that a valid state permit be submitted along with the application for a 'development permit,' and that the site design review application is an application for a 'development permit,' because it seeks authorization to construct a large retail store. ...

"We agree with (CRAW) that if the planning director's interpretation gives no effect to the term 'development permit,' then that interpretation is inconsistent with the text of (city code) which clearly presumes that there is some class of permits that qualify as 'development permits' for purposes of that code section, and that such permits are distinct from grading or building permits."

LUBA also agreed on the second assignment of error, that addressed the location of the loading docks.

Part of the city's site design review standards requires loading docks, outdoor storage yards and all other service areas to be located on the sides and/or rear of the building except when that site abuts Highway 101.

With Walmart's current design, the store does butt up against the highway, with loading docks still facing the roadway. The plans allow for a screening wall to disguise the docks, but LUBA sustained CRAW's argument.

"We agree with petitioners that the city erred in concluding that the loading dock location complies with (city code)," the opinion states.

Finally, the third assignment of error was also met with agreement, in regards to the bike racks. LUBA ruled that Walmart had not proven a hardship for the reason why the number should be reduced.

The city, in its claim, addressed the hardship by saying "it was created through the imposition of the code requirement to provide 68 bicycle spaces with development of the site. The proposed use is a retail store that specializes in general household and consumer products and at times large packaged items and merchandise that are not typically transported via bicycle."

When Costco's application was approved, the city allowed for a reduction in bike rack spaces. The Warrenton City commission additionally has talked about removing this requirement from their code, capping the requirement at 28.

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Walmart welcomed

I'm certain the unheard majority of Northwest Oregonians hope Walmart doesn't give up on the idea of moving here, but you wonder how long they'll endure the hate groups who want to stop them. Liquefied natural gas, the coal facility in Longview, Wash., the chance to level the old and ugly outdated hotel at the Port of Astoria and build a brand new motel with a beautifully landscaped green belt walk way, have been derailed – now Walmart.

It's unbelievable how these small groups of local/state bureaucrats, and a very loud, vocal minority of Walmart haters jumping up and down, with the help of groups with names like the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals and Clatsop Residents Against Walmart (CRAW), keep from improving our community. Their primary goal is always to halt businesses and jobs, and thus much needed tax revenue from coming to our area.

The wetlands permitting process is a complete joke. They let Home Depot, Costco, Taco Bell, Lum's Auto Center, two auto parts stores, and a strip mall be built in wetland areas near Warrenton. But Walmart? Oh no, they have to have this kind of store front and have this many bicycle racks, and on and on.

They invent anything – any ridiculous attempt to stop them – not because they're worried about wetlands, but because they want us to continue to be held hostage by

Fred Meyer and Safeway and their outrageously high prices. Small towns and small businesses in cities like Astoria must evolve. The mom and pop stores don't offer the choices or the prices low-income earners need to support their families.

The *Daily Astorian's* bleeding heart editorial pieces, and the letters to the editor by many readers, are always quick to point how the school district, the college, the public transportation system, the "this program" and "that program" need taxpayer funding – but they, along with this small loud minority, continue to stop any attempts of business from taking root.

Instead, the answer is always to swamp us working people with higher taxes, not to solicit business and the jobs and tax revenue they would generate. The Warrenton City Planning Commission needs to be replaced with members who understand that courting business, not bending to these groups, is what's needed. If not, the store that will turn the highest profit may be Goodwill, another brand-new structure built near the same wetlands these Walmart haters are crying about.

I guess I'll continue to take the one-hour car ride every two or three weeks, and take my money to Longview or to Vancouver, Wash., Walmart to save money on toiletries, clothes and groceries, like I've been doing since I moved here in 2007. Thanks, Oregon.

5.10.2013

JEFF JACQUES
Astoria

For the little guy

In response to Dennis Berry's letter, "No to Walmart" (*The Daily Astorian*, May 6): Every place the word Walmart is used, you can substitute Home Depot, Costco and Fred Meyer in past letters.

Probably 90 percent of the people in Clatsop County already make the lowest pay. Walmart is for the little guy. 5-17-2013

JEANIE PETERMANN
Warrenton

Stores are the same

It is hard for me to understand Dennis Berry's reasoning in his letter to the editor ("No to Walmart," *The Daily Astorian*, May 3). The letter describes Walmart as a store focused on profit while mistreating their employees, and holds up Fred Meyer (Kroger) and Safeway as good examples. Many know that Fred Meyer and Safeway are just as focused on profit, and also have had a poor record on labor relations.

My larger point is two-fold: First, there is no important difference

between any of these large retail chains. All are here to make a profit, provide employment and serve their customers. There is nothing wrong with that.

Secondly; the issues of retail prices, ownership, competition between chain stores, and labor relations are irrelevant to the reasons for the city of Warrenton's approval of Walmart, and the Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) decision to overturn that approval.

I wish there had been a better, more useful discussion about our local responsibility for Walmart, which should be, in fairness, directed toward the city of Warrenton. I think the public should be equally focused on the city's decisions in zoning and development that welcome Walmart, Fred Meyer, Home Depot, Costco and other national retailers.

Personally, I am neutral on these stores, and from a land-use perspective they are all the same. Venting about a particular business is not useful. Hopefully, people will become better aware of the land-use planning and policy decisions made years ago, which lead to the decisions being made at public hearings today.

5-17-2013 JACK OSTERBERG
Astoria

The quiet majority

Three cheers for Jeff Jacques and his support of Walmart and the silent majority of Northwestern Oregon and Southwestern Washington ("Walmart welcomed," *The Daily Astorian*, May 10). For every so-called winner in this anti-Walmart campaign, there are also big losers, and they are the area shoppers and the unemployed.

As Jacques has said, the anti-Walmart voices are the same ones that shot down liquefied natural gas facilities, the coal facility in Longview, Wash., and soon, I'll bet, the shipbreaking facility at Tongue Point. There have been no new major employers since the fish canneries and the lumber mill disappeared.

I sincerely hope that Walmart and the city of Warrenton continue their battle against the good ol' boys, the do-gooders and *The Daily Astorian* so that the quiet majority can be counted as winners.

Sixty-five bike racks in Warrenton? Get real.

5-24-2013 WILLIAM HILL
Astoria

Walmart welcome

To all those Walmart haters: If you don't like Walmart, don't go, and stop bashing them.

You all keep talking about how low their wages are. Have you ever worked at a large retailer? If not, I would suggest you get a job at any one of them, and you will learn first hand how low their wages are, and how terribly they treat their employees.

The people who shop downtown are still going to shop downtown. Walmart does not offer the same type of retail items or customer service that you will find in the downtown area. I run a small business downtown, and I welcome Walmart to the area. People will buy their inexpensive items, and when they break or don't work right, they will come to us to fix them.

Go pay top dollar at other local large retailers, if that's what you want. But for those of us (and I'm sure there are many) who cannot afford to pay top dollar, we welcome Walmart.

5-24-2013 CHERYL LONG
Astoria

Warrenton welcomes Walmart

Hellberg raps critics; company wants to build 'as quickly as possible'

By **CHELSEA GORROW**
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — A Walmart store has been approved in Warrenton. Again.

The Warrenton City Commission approved a revised site design review plan Tuesday night after a public hear-

ing. The application had been remanded back to the city by Oregon's Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA).

The vote was 4-0 with Mark Kujala, Tom Dyer, Dick Hellberg and Mark Baldwin in favor. The fifth commissioner, Henry Balensifer, was absent.

LUBA issued its ruling in April following an approval in November by the Warrenton Planning Commission and a subsequent appeal by Clatsop Residents Against Walmart (CRAW). The appeal — which was upheld — was based on three key issues:

- Walmart did not have its

state wetlands fill permit in hand when it submitted its application to the Planning Commission. It has since obtained that permit.

- Walmart failed to prove it had a hardship in asking for a lower number of bike stalls. Per the city's code, the store would be required to have one

bike stall per 10 parking spaces, equaling 68 for the retail giant. Costco was permitted a variance to reduce its required bike stall number to 10. In the revision, the store has accepted the 68 stalls required at the front of the store.

'This has gone on too long. And I am very happy.'

— **Dick Hellberg**
Warrenton city commissioner

See WALMART Page 10A

Walmart: Opponents see victories

Continued from Page 1A

• Walmart's design was against code by placing loading docks behind the store, visible from U.S. Highway 101. In the revised design, three loading docks have been moved to the east side of the building, expanding the store by 900 square feet and providing nine more parking spaces for customers. It removed the need for the screening wall between the store and the highway.

"Walmart made the decision that instead of taking time to appeal that decision to the Court of Appeals," said attorney Greg Hathaway, representing Walmart, "it takes too much time and too many resources. And what Walmart wants to do is build a structure. And they'd like to build that project as quickly as they possibly can, once they get final approval from your city."

"So Walmart made the decision that instead of appealing the decision that we disagree with at LUBA, we decided that we would comply with LUBA's decision in every respect — and that's exactly what we've done and exactly what we're presenting to you this evening."

Hathaway later added, "The community is going to be proud of this store."

The four members of the City Commission approved the plan unanimously.

But first, they allowed the public to speak to the issue before a vote was taken.

"I want to congratulate your responding to the remands and I like the idea that you were considering some of Costco's plan into your original support to your design review," said

Sara Meyer of Astoria, a member of CRAW.

"Maybe if Walmart did a payment system and a support system for employees as Costco does, we might not be here. PacLand (the developers) resubmitted its plans for Walmart because LUBA agreed with us that they were not following Warrenton requirements.

co-founder Lori Durheim for being so respectful in their comments about Walmart. Respect goes a long way with him, he said. And, although the result didn't turn out the way the women had hoped, he said he appreciated their attitude.

But Commissioner Hellberg felt differently, issuing

disagree with their business philosophy. They're legal!"

Hellberg said he's received the information that was distributed by CRAW with the DVD "The High Cost of Low Price." He has a family member who worked as a pharmacist in the store. He also doesn't like the notion of denying one business because a person personally favors another.

"That's not what this country is about. It's about competition. And I'm not going to vote ever against a business that is legally established, has a good running record. In this case Walmart is one of the largest if not the largest corporation in the United States," Hellberg continued. "I know there is a dispute with labor. That's not for the City Commission to decide. That's for the people who work for Walmart and Walmart to decide, and not for a lot of people who are sympathetic to this cause and consume time of the city and every public official."

"This has gone on too long. And I am very happy. I am going to vote for this motion."

Hellberg added that he was tired of hearing about it from opponents who spend "hours and hours" at public meetings, picking the language apart. His comments were met with applause from many members of the audience.

Hellberg also noted that few Warrenton community members were in the audience to complain about the issue. Both Durheim and Meyer live in Astoria.

Commissioner Baldwin seconded the motion and the resubmission was approved.

'As minimal as they are, it was citizen efforts that made them meet city codes.'

— Sara Meyer
Walmart opponents group

As minimal as they are, it was citizen efforts that made them meet city codes. And I think for that, I thank the CRAW folks. Your resubmitted design has met those requirements. ...

"The reasons that CRAW

a stern message to those opposing the store, after he made a motion for approval.

"We allow businesses to come to Warrenton. It's been a benefit to our community to have these busi-

'I'm not going to vote ever against a business that is legally established, has a good running record.'

— Dick Hellberg
Warrenton city commissioner



nesses," Hellberg said of the "big-box" stores. "As long as a business is an honest business, and it's something that we would want, or we already have those types of stores in our community, unless there is something illegal about their operation, and I mean illegal, they're doing something morally wrong, I'm not going to vote against a business strictly because I

formed was for the quality of life that we do enjoy on the coast. We ask that you keep that quality of life. A Walmart comes in, they very strongly compete with businesses. They hold 67 percent of retail sales, so that means you won't have those businesses in business. And that's your decision."

Commissioner Dyer thanked Meyer and CRAW

8.14.2013



Warrenton Senior Citizen's, Inc. were delighted to have two 90-year-old ladies celebrating Kay Fackler's birthday at the senior lunch meal site on Monday the 8th of August. Pictured above are Kay Fackler (left) and Lolly Hessel who turned 90 in January. (Photo by Emma Edwards)

Commission approves Walmart plan

Continued from page 1

In his comments, Hathaway told the commission that Walmart has strictly complied with the LUBA requirements and the city codes.

"Walmart took this job seriously," he said. "This community will be proud of that store."

Commissioner Dick Hellberg made a motion to approve the site design changes and the commission voted unanimously in favor.

After the vote, Hellberg commented on the issue. He said that he received a CD from a former Warrenton city commissioner "that showed how terrible Walmart was."

"I think any business will be a benefit to the community as long as the business is an honest business," he said. "Unless something is illegal or immoral, I'm not going to vote against a business. That's not what this country is about. I know there's a dispute with labor. That's not what the commission should decide."

Hellberg then chided the members of CRAW saying, "Don't come and consume the time of your elected officials. I don't see a lot of people in Warrenton here. But there's a lot from across the river. I'm sorry you guys lost your business community but that's the way it goes."

Commissioner Mark Baldwin said he agreed with most of Hellberg's comments. "Who are we to say a business can't come here," he said. "If you don't like the business, don't go to it."

Commissioner Tom Dyer voiced his thanks to CRAW for their participation in the process.

"I appreciate your candor and respect," he said. "It's not always easy to be on the other side of something."



Queen for a Year

Kim Dowaliby of Hammond was crowned Astoria Regatta Queen during ceremonies on August 8 at Astoria High School. Kim is the daughter of Todd and Dixie Dowaliby of Hammond.

Commission approves Walmart plan

By Gary Nevan

The new Walmart proposed for Warrenton is back on track after the giant retailer agreed to abide by conditions set by the state Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA).

Earlier this year, Clatsop Residents against Walmart (CRAW) had appealed to LUBA a Warrenton Planning Commission site design approval from last year for a proposed 154,400 square foot Walmart store on U.S. Highway 101 at the corner of S.E. Ensign, across from Costco.

The appeal addressed three assignments of error regarding the planning commission approval.

1. A valid State of Oregon wetland removal-fill authorization was required.
2. Truck loading docks and outdoor storage yards need to be located in the rear of the building at the south end and not facing Highway 101.
3. The variance requested by Walmart to reduce the number of bicycle parking units did not address the nature of the alleged hardship or explain why the hardship results from the size, shape or dimension of the site or the location of existing structures.

LUBA agreed with CRAW and remanded the case back to the city for additional consideration.

A public hearing was held at Tuesday night's Warrenton City Commission meeting to address the issue.

Gregory Hathaway, an attorney from Portland representing Walmart, told the commission while he thinks that LUBA made an error in their ruling, "Walmart decided not to appeal to the court of appeals."

"We don't agree with the decision," he said. But he added, "What Walmart wants to do is build this project as quickly as possible."

Hathaway said his client decided to abide by the LUBA decision "and has strictly complied with LUBA."

He told the commission that Walmart has obtained a Department of State Lands removal-fill authorization, has altered the building design to locate the truck dock loading area and other outdoor storage facilities to the south end of the building, and has withdrawn the bicycle parking variance. As a result, there will be 67 bicycle parking units instead of the 24 requested.

Several members of CRAW were in the audience and voiced their opinion about a Walmart locating in Warrenton.

Lori Durheim of Astoria told the commission, "I think it's going to be a lousy idea. It will hurt a lot of communities around here."

Sara Meyer of Astoria said, "I congratulate Walmart for responding to the remand." But she added, "You are short-changing your city. They are not business friendly."

8.16.2013 Continued on page 5

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8/16/2013

Continued on page 5

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"I appreciate your candor and respect," he said. "It's not always easy to be on the other side of something."

Check it out

In view of the recent decision by the Warrenton City Council: Do you know the real value of a Walmart employee? He would have to work 785 years, assuming he was working 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year, and didn't have to pay taxes, to match the annual salary of the CEO Michael Duke's annual salary of \$20.7 million. Makes you wonder about the values of such a company.

Factoid from *The Week* magazine, May 3, 2013. That translates to: "The CEO of Walmart makes more in a single hour than a full-time Walmart associate makes in an entire year." That translates to "obscene" to me.

In 2000, Walmart was sued 4,851 times, about once every two hours. I wonder why?

Walmart is battling 1.6 million employees in the largest class action sex discrimination law suit ever – the potential cost is \$11 billion. Of course that gets passed on to the consumer. You can read more at Business Insider.

Sadly, about 85 percent of all the products sold at Walmart are made outside of the U.S. According to the Economic Policy Institute, trade between Walmart and China resulted in the loss of 133,000 manufacturing jobs in the U.S. between 2001 and 2006.

A study of small and rural towns in Iowa showed lost sales for local businesses ranging from -17.2 percent in small towns to -61.4 percent in rural areas, amounting to a total dollar loss of \$2.46 billion over a 13-year period.

Maybe in the big picture, cheap stuff has a greater cost than we realize.

8.23.2013 LAREE JOHNSON
Astoria

Hitching post

An open letter to the Warrenton City Commission and Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals:

Well, it's still 68 bicycle racks. I have never, ever seen a bicyclist shopping at a big box store for large amounts of anything. You just might as well ask Walmart to put in a horse trough and hitching posts – you never know when a horse rider will be shopping there.

As I look at all the big box stores, I have not seen that many bicycle racks, including the ones already here. After all, we now have two beautiful big box stores already along U.S. Highway 101. I suggest having 10 bike racks and more handicapped parking – because this is more of a retirement community, you have a bigger call for handicapped/disability parking places.

Other than some coastal bike runs on U.S. Highway 101 (which is extremely dangerous for bike riders) between Astoria and Seaside, I have never seen more than two bike riders riding at the same time, let alone 68 of them.

Do you know how very stupid you sound on finding the poorest of excuses to turn down their applications over and over again? This reminds me of a government commission 50 years ago, and I never believed them, either.

8.23.2013 DOT JONES
Ocean Park, Wash.

Facial tattoos

Thank you for the "Warrenton welcomes Walmart" (*The Daily Astorian*, Aug. 14) news

and the American history lesson Dick Hellberg has provided us all.

How fortunate Warrenton must be to have individuals like Hellberg, who have their fingers on the pulse of the local communities and a keen understanding of local government, not to mention the country as a whole.

You can tell Hellberg has spent an hour or so in serious thought as to what is best for the community of Warrenton, and immediately came to the conclusion that Warrenton will make the perfect franchise town. Hellberg is a man of no regrets, and he is absolutely correct that if you are honest, and not doing anything illegal, you should be welcomed with open arms and into the family of Warrenton.

And let's face it; the latest craze is for big box junk stores. Another craze currently sweeping the nation, and that is of particular interest to me, is facial tattooing. I am confident Warrenton will welcome a mega-ink store that specializes in facial tattoos, and since Hellberg is a man of no regrets, I am betting he will be the first in line to get his.

However, should the four Wise Men of Warrenton decide that mega tattooing is not the right fit for the community, all will not be lost, and there will be no sadness, because all we have to do is drive U.S. Highway 101 and see the facial tattoo these four men have planted on the face of Warrenton.

WESLEY W. WAITE

8.23.2013 Astoria

Walmart moving ahead with Warrenton store

By Chelsea Gorrow
EO Media Group

WARRENTON — After many delays, a Walmart store is back on course to be built near Costco in Warrenton following an Aug. 13 decision by the Warrenton City Commission.

Local opponents of Walmart's plans appealed the company's plans to Oregon's Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA). LUBA ruled in April that Walmart and the city needed to address three issues before the project could move ahead.

After considering the matter since then, Walmart decided to comply with the conditions that were of concern to LUBA:

"We believe the Warrenton Walmart can be part of the solution for our North Coast customers looking for more affordable shopping options closer to where they live and work."

- Walmart did not have its state wetlands fill permit in hand when it submitted its application to the Planning Commission. It has since obtained that permit.

- Walmart failed to prove it had a hardship in asking for a lower number of bike stalls. Per the city's code, the store would be required to have one bike stall per 10 park-

ing spaces, equaling 68 for the retail giant. Costco was permitted a variance to reduce its required bike stall number to 10. In the revision, the store has accepted the 68 stalls required at the front of the store.

- Walmart's design was against code by placing loading docks behind the store, visible from U.S. Highway 101. In the revised design, three loading docks have been moved to the east side of the building, expanding the store by 900 square feet and providing nine more parking spaces for customers. It removed the need for the screening wall between the store and the highway.



Dick Hellberg

"Walmart made the decision that instead of taking time to appeal that decision to the Court of Appeals," said attorney Greg Hathaway, representing Walmart, "it takes too much time and too many resources. And what Walmart wants to do is build a structure. And they'd like to build that project as quickly as they possibly can, once they get final approval from your city."

"So Walmart made the decision that instead of appealing the decision that we disagree with at LUBA, we decided that we would comply with LUBA's decision in every respect — and that's exactly what we've done and exactly what we're presenting to you this evening."

Hathaway later added, "The community is going to be proud of this store."

The city commission vote was 4-0 with Mark Kujala, Tom Dyer, Dick Hellberg and Mark Baldwin in favor. The fifth commissioner, Henry Balensifer, was absent.

"We are pleased with tonight's outcome and are one step closer to beginning work on the project," said Rachel Wall, senior manager for community affairs for Walmart. "We believe the Warrenton Walmart can be part of the solution for our North Coast customers looking for more affordable shopping options closer to where they live and work, as well as new job opportunities in the community. We are pleased with the updated design and appreciate the guidance from city staff throughout this process."

Wal-Mart is fickle

When it comes to Wal-Mart, beware what you wish for. Here is what is happening in some 100 towns across America. Bloomberg Business Week reports that when Wal-Mart closed more than 100 small stores, it left several small towns without a grocery. Why? Because Wal-Mart's entry into their markets had already killed longtime local small grocers.

In retail and other lines of business, it has become an article of faith that consumer loyalty has vanished. Shoppers are fickle, abandoning long-established brands and stores for the faceless, anonymous market on the Internet. What those shoppers fail to realize when they yearn for a market-wrecker like Wal-Mart is that it, too, can be quite fickle.

Many Clatsop County shoppers itch for Wal-Mart to build its Warrenton store. And why not? It is economically rational to seek low prices. And the day likely

will arrive when the walls go up in Warrenton.

Wal-Mart's presence will put some Clatsop County businesses in jeopardy. At the same time, Wal-Mart will not be a community player. That is something that Wal-Mart shoppers fail to realize when they abandon locally owned businesses in favor of the rootless cost-cutter. Wal-Mart is one of those multi-national businesses that lives everywhere and nowhere. It has no loyalty and it will not help nurture the local nonprofit sector, which provides so much of Clatsop County's quality of life.

Newcomers to Astoria, Warrenton, Gearhart and Seaside value the individuality of our communities. They like it that our places have not succumbed to the anonymity that has consumed so many cities and suburbs, and that includes the numbing effect that Wal-Mart has on local enterprise. 2.4.2016

No trial in Wal-Mart wetland squabble

Case between activists, Corps will hinge on motions filed

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

The case by Clatsop Residents Against Walmart against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will likely be decided without a trial.

Lawyers for both sides waived a pretrial order due last week, agreeing that a trial is highly unlikely as they seek summary judgment from the U.S. District Court of Oregon. Under the Administrative Procedures Act, which dictates how courts review claims against the decisions of government agencies, the case will largely be decided by motions each side has filed.

The citizen's group, formed in 2010 to oppose the multinational retailer opening a location on the North Coast, filed suit against the Corps a year ago, claiming the agency failed to adequately protect wetlands and review a wetland fill permit near the North Coast Retail Center. The Corps issued a permit for Peaksview LLC, which owns a strip of land on the southeastern corner of Ensign Lane and U.S. Highway 101, to fill 0.37 acres of wetland for construction of a big box retailer.



Karl Anuta

Karl Anuta, the lawyer for the residents group fighting Wal-Mart, said a trial is only necessary if the facts of the case are in dispute. Instead of factual disagreements, he said, CRAW and the Corps are in disagreement as to how the law applies to the facts.

The Corps' lawyer, Sean Martin, said in a case like this, both sides make their filings, and the court decides whether the Corps was justified in granting the wetland fill permit.

5.26.2016 D.A.F.P.

See SQUABBLE, Page 7A

Squabble: There's no timeline on the court deciding what to do

Continued from Page 1A

That review could involve oral arguments, which both sides have requested in their motions for summary judgment, or a review of filings by the judge. There is no timeline on the court deciding what to do.

Arguments

The citizens group alleges the Corps improperly permitted Wal-Mart to fill the wetlands for the new store without adequately assessing environmental impacts and available alternatives. Anuta seeks judicial review of the Corps' wetland fill permit at the retail center under

the federal Clean Water Act and National Environmental Policy Act, along with review of the Corps' environmental impact analysis and finding of no significant impact in September 2014 that underpinned the approval of the fill permit.

As for alternatives, Anuta claims the Corps arbitrarily

rejected a parcel owned by Warrenton Fiber Co. and the Nygaard family behind the Les Schwab Tire Center, where the agency had approved filling in wetlands in 2009 for the retailer to be able to build.

The Corps argues the wetland fill at the retail center will have a minimal impact in a des-

ignated nonsignificant wetlands, while providing a significant benefit for an economically depressed region.

In a filing in support of the Corps' motion for summary judgment, Martin claims the Corps looked at the Nygaard property but determined it was not a practical alternative

because of costs for development and logistical concerns.

"Neither plaintiffs' philosophical opposition to Wal-Mart, nor their permitting disagreements and regulatory methodology preferences, render the Corps' permit decision arbitrary and capricious," Martin wrote.

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Attention Wal-Mart shoppers: Project moving slowly, steadily

BY CINDY YINGST
The Columbia Press

There's plenty of dirt moving around at the future home of Wal-Mart, despite the company's decision twice to cancel ground-breaking ceremonies.

Big equipment used for dirt-moving, hole-digging and earth compression are creating a flurry of activity at the site across from Costco in the North Coast Business Park.

"When I talked to the superintendent, he told me they've put it off until they're ready to start putting the building up," said Skip Urling, Warrenton's Community Development Director. "They have a lot of dirt to move. They have to flatten the site out to build the building and parking lot. There's lots of holes to fill and hills to move."

A lot of the dirt is being moved off site. And a sewer pump station is being disassembled and moved elsewhere.

And then things will be flattened and utilities and other infrastructure can go in.

Wal-Mart: Lots of earth-moving, but no 'ground-breaking'

Continued from Page 1

"The new Warrenton Wal-Mart Supercenter is expected to open in spring 2018 and we expect to hire approximately 250 associates to serve our customers," said Delia Garcia, senior director of communications for Wal-Mart.

They expect to begin hiring later this year.

The 150,000-square-foot store will carry a broad assortment of groceries and general merchandise, Garcia said. There will be a full pharmacy and a free store pickup service whereby shoppers can buy products from Walmart.com and, many times, pick

the items up in the store later in the day.

The project was approved by the City Commission in 2013. But construction stalled when a group calling itself CRAW, Clatsop Residents Against Wal-Mart, filed suit claiming the Army Corps of Engineers hadn't adequately assessed how the project would affect the area's wetlands.

The case was dismissed over the summer, but then CRAW took it to the Federal Court of Appeals.

"If Wal-Mart does damage the wetlands during this construction, and if the permit is

found to have been unlawfully issued, then Wal-Mart could potentially be found liable for damaging the wetlands without a legal permit," a post on the group's website states. "CRAW will be watching this construction very closely and fully intend to make Wal-Mart accountable."

Others are eager to see more jobs and more shopping opportunities in the region.

"You can't keep everybody happy," Urling said. "If you own the property and you design your project to meet the city's standards and criteria, then you have a right to build on your land. ... I think they've got a pretty aggressive timeline."

Opponents argue the company, which employs 1.3 million associates nationwide, doesn't pay enough to support a family and offers few employee benefits. And, when the mega-retailer comes into regions such as Clatsop County, mom-and-pop businesses are hurt.

Proponents and the company point out that 75 percent of the management team began as hourly associates and now earn between \$50,000 and \$170,000 a year.

While some businesses may be hurt, others open and thrive in the new shopping environment.

A new Wal-Mart will certainly change the city.

While not speaking directly about Wal-Mart, Police Chief Matthew Workman talked about growth and its effects at a City Commission meeting last month.

"We're going through a metamorphosis as we change, congruent with growth in the city," he said. "Our infrastructure is not pacing the growth well. ... The Police Department, physically, is about at capacity." 2-10-2017

C.P. 2-10 2017

BUSINESS OF THE MONTH



Three of Sunset Napa Auto's six employees: Shawn Daw, store manager; Allyson Geier, delivery driver; and Tommie Gilson, counter sales.

**Sunset Auto
Parts**
Where
269 S. Main Ave.
Phone
503-861-2268
Hours
8-6 weekdays
8-5 Saturday
9-5 Sunday
Website
www.napaonline.com

Warrenton Auto Parts changed hands late last year after longtime owner Rick Newton decided to retire.

He sold the company to Barry Hess of Scappoose, who owns 18 Sunset Auto Parts stores in Oregon and Washington. Hess had just acquired the store in Seaview, Wash., when the Warrenton opportunity came up.

While the timing wasn't perfect, the latest addition to the Sunset Auto Parts chain is moving through the changes and growing pains and will come out on the other side a new and better store.

An interview with Jason Henning, general manager of Sunset Auto Parts:

Tell me about the business.

Sunset Auto Parts also owns stores in Seaside, Astoria and Seaview. The two owners had an agreement when Rick was ready to retire that Barry would buy it. It's been a little bit of a struggle, because it didn't really come with any employees. Newton and his wife worked in the store and their longtime counter person left.

What are your plans?

We have intentions to get the store remodeled and cleaned up. Right now, we're adding sizeable inventory. We've got big plans. The building is quite small and we occupy the building behind us. It's hard



to work out of such a tiny facility with that much inventory. We're going to build the business back up and in a year or two move to a bigger, better location.

What services do you offer?

Our employees are some of the best in the business. We have three very knowledgeable employees. Shawn grew up in the area and worked at several different dealerships. Tommie has worked in auto parts and as a mechanic for 30 years. Jim Richards used to own the Seaside Napa store. We have a huge inventory of auto parts. Plus, we are trying to improve the availability of parts. We have a shuttle vehicle between Seaside, Warrenton and Astoria. In the past, it was 'if you need it, I can get it to you tomorrow.' Now it's in a few hours.

What are you doing that's different or unique?

We're not a corporately-owned chain, so the money people are spending here will stay in the area. We're investing in the area. We want to give back to the community. Already we've given some product and computer-scanning tools to the high school auto shop club.



Collin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Local dignitaries joined Walmart representatives in Warrenton on Friday for a ceremonial groundbreaking event at the construction site for the new development.

Walmart makes a grand entrance

BY CINDY YINGST
The Columbia Press

Dozens of blue-vested workers scurry about the nearly open Walmart, shelving and pricing items.

Contractors in yellow safety vests hang the final electrical cables and activate the last security cameras.

Two gentlemen greeters are assigned to the entryway, en-

Grand opening

All day Wednesday, June 13, with a brief ceremony at 8 a.m.

suring employees, construction workers and visitors get to their destinations.

Store Manager Kimberly Smith works on plans for the store's grand opening, a gala celebration with a Coast Guard presentation, food trucks, Sunday Market vendors and other parking lot activities, an event she plans to extend through the weekend.

"We're going to have a good time with the community," Smith says.

It's her third stint as a Walmart store manager, her second building a store from the ground up. While she comes to Warrenton from Washington state, 98 percent of the store's 300 employees are local.

"And I've already promoted 10 percent of them after we got into the store," she says. With

See 'Walmart' on Page 4

Top: Store Manager Kimberly Smith will welcome shoppers during Wednesday's grand opening.

Left: "Where the heck is Warrenton" reads a local specialty product.

Below: Last-minute work in the pick-up area.

Cindy Yingst/The Columbia Press



Walmart: Supercenter includes items ordered especially for Warrenton

Continued from Page 1

so many employees, hiring will be an ongoing task.

The 150,000-square-foot Walmart Supercenter has a bakery, deli and grocery section, plus an order-online and stay-in-your-car grocery pick-up area.

All the other departments one would expect in a Walmart are here, too: shoes, clothes, toys, baby products, jewelry, appliances, garden center, sporting goods. The entertainment department is set up in open-stock display, whereby shoppers can touch and try out laptops, phones, TVs and other products. The vibrantly painted pharmacy has privacy partitions built



Angelica Wright and Brandon Emmons gets items ready for sale in the office supplies section.

into the counter and a separate immunization room.

An in-store pick-up area is right inside the entrance, where products ordered online or via phone wait in

large lockers.

Who would use this service? "Working full time, I could order what I needed on my lunch break and have it ready when I got off work," Smith explains. "Sometimes that after-work shopping trip can turn into an hour and a half, so let us shop for you."

There's a Subway restaurant inside and room for a second vendor.

Many products carried in the new store were ordered



Above: Warrenton Walmart's spiffed-up storefront.

Below: Empty produce bins wait for last-minute perishables.



especially for Warrenton and Clatsop County.

There are "Where the heck is Warrenton" and "Where the heck is Seaside" hoodies, rods made for catching salmon, crab traps, an "ultimate cargo cart" for hauling items

to the beach.

"I'm excited beyond words," Smith says of the impending opening. "I can't wait to give the community what they've been waiting for: great items at a low price."



Photos by Collin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Walmart General Manager Kimberly Smith stands outside the Warrenton location set to open on Wednesday.

WALMART ERA BEGINS ON THE NORTH COAST

By **EDWARD STRATTON**
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — After years of lawsuits, settling on a location and building a storefront, the North Coast's new Walmart opens at 8 a.m. Wednesday on the corner of Ensign Lane and U.S. Highway 101.

The national retailer has been filling its new supercenter and training staff in preparation for the grand opening. General Manager Kimberly Smith said the store has hired more than 250 people.

GRAND OPENING

The North Coast's new Walmart is located on the corner of Ensign Lane and U.S. Highway 101. It's scheduled to open at 8 a.m. Wednesday.

"I want to say 95, 98 percent of our associates are local," Smith said, adding that while the store has enough people to open, it will continue to hire.

The 150,000-square-foot supercenter includes groceries, electronics, clothing, home accessories, sporting goods, a pharmacy, auto and outdoors, along with a Subway restaurant and ATM. The store has made nods to local hobbies, such as clam guns, crab pots and a do-it-yourself baiting area, Smith said.

See **WALMART**, Page 5A

6-12-2018

*Daily
Astorian*

Walmart: Store's arrival has divided opinions

Continued from Page 1A

Customers can preorder items through the retailer's smartphone application for pickup at the store.

During the grand opening, the store will give out around \$40,000 in grants to local groups, along with other prizes for customers. A pop-up fair will feature food carts and vendors from Astoria Sunday Market. Visitors will get a tour of the store and instruction on how to use the app.

Grand opening celebrations will continue for the coming week.

Walmart's arrival has divided opinions locally. Many people are excited by the addition of another national retailer, while others lament the potential threat to local business.

Clatsop Residents Against Walmart, a group formed in 2010 to oppose the retailer's move to Warrenton, had sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in federal court after the agency granted a permit for the store's developer to fill in .37 acres of wetland. The case and a subsequent appeal were both dismissed. Karl Anuta, the group's lawyer, said the group is mulling whether to file a petition and have the case heard again.



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Walmart employees were busy in the kitchen producing baked goods ahead of Wednesday's grand opening.



Walmart employees at the new store in Warrenton prepare for the grand opening.

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DailyAstorian.com // THURSDAY, JUNE 14, 2018

ONE DOLLAR

Customers line up for new Walmart in Warrenton

A long-awaited grand opening

By HANNAH SIEVERT
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — Kim Lichner was one of the first to arrive Wednesday morning at Walmart for the grand opening.

She had driven past the new store the night before to see if anyone was waiting

in line, but it was empty. So she showed up again at 4 a.m. to make sure she was one of the first customers through the doors.

Lichner, of Astoria, wasn't the only one excited. The national retailer opened to a line of dozens of customers at 8 a.m.

"This is probably the largest opening of a store we've ever had in the community," Mayor Henry Balensifer said. "It shows the community wants it."

See WALMART, Page 7A



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Walmart employees cut the ribbon Wednesday to celebrate the opening of the new store in Warrenton.

Walmart: 'It takes a village to open a Walmart, to raise a Walmart'



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

People line up for the grand opening of the new Walmart store in Warrenton.

Continued from Page 1A

Before customers could start to shop, the store held a ceremony that included music from the Warrenton High School marching band, a ribbon-cutting and speeches from Balensifer and state Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose.

Walmart General Manager Kimberly Smith said the store had hired 250 employees, 98 percent of which are from the local community. She gave away \$23,000 to community groups, including the Astoria Parks, Recreation and Community Foundation, Clatsop County's Healthy Kids program and the local police and fire station.

"It takes a village to open a Walmart, to raise a Walmart," Smith said. "Welcome to the Walmart family."

Construction began last September after years of planning. Smith and Chris Emmons, the Walmart support manager, said people have been approaching them for months to ask when the new store would open.

"I can hardly shop for myself at other stores," Smith said. "When are you open, when are you open?" It's been all about inviting everybody and obviously the word got out. There was a lot more people here than I anticipated."

For Emmons, the opening is a chance to move back home. The Oregon native started working for Walmart 22 years ago in Newport. He moved for Walmart job opportunities eight times — from Oregon to Idaho, Montana and South Dakota.

The Warrenton store means Emmons can move back to the coast from North Dakota and settle down for good.

"Other cities aren't as friendly (as Warrenton)," Emmons said. "I love the coast. I'm looking forward to the craziness of the tourist season. I'm glad to be back."

Ann Thomson, a Seaside resident and one of the store's first customers, sees Walmart as a positive change.

"I think it's good competition for the area," she said.